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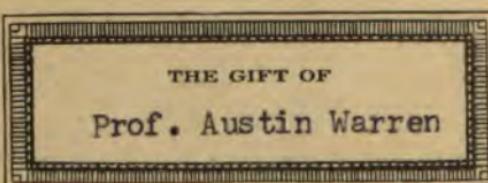
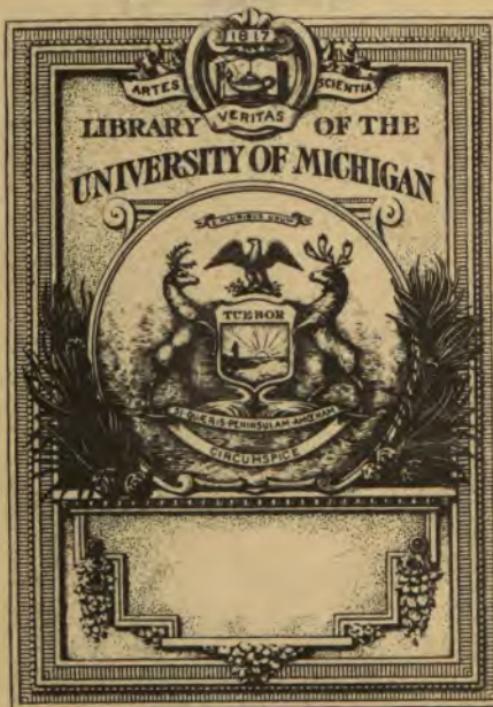
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# **GOETHE'S POEMS**



Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von.

# GOETHE'S POEMS

SELECTED AND EDITED  
WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER ON METRE  
AND NOTES

BY

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## PREFACE

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The present volume contains more than fifty of the finest and most famous products of Goethe's lyrical genius. In making their selection, the editors have purposely chosen the longer and more difficult rather than the shorter and easier poems, their intention being, as will be evident from the nature of the notes, to interest readers who desire more than a superficial acquaintance with Goethe's poetry—such as the higher forms of schools, and students of a university type.

With the object of facilitating the study of the poems in the only way in which many of them are to be fully understood, namely, by a reference to the poet's life, a short biographical sketch is given.

A short chapter on metre, divided into two parts, the first dealing with German versification generally, and the second more especially with Goethe's metre, has also been added. Just as the short survey of the life is intended to assist in the better understanding of the thought, it is hoped that this additional chapter may lead to a fuller and more correct appreciation of the form, and of

the poet's range and mastery in the field of poetic workmanship.

In preparing the notes the editors have derived much help from the numerous German commentaries on the poems, more particularly from those of Duntzer, von Loeper, Strehlke, and Blume. They have also referred repeatedly and with much profit to the large number of articles and notes contained in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* and the various German periodicals.

For that part of the Introduction which deals with metre, the works most frequently consulted were J. Minor's *Neuhochdeutsche Metrik*, and F. Kauffmann's *Deutsche Metrik*.

The text is that of the Weimar edition.

H. G. A.

L. E. K.

*September, 1902.*

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# INTRODUCTION.

## I.

### SUMMARY OF GOETHE'S LIFE AND WORKS.

In more than one passage Goethe has pointed out the intimate connection that exists between his life and his works, and never more clearly than when he said that they were the "*fragments of one great confession*". The two are inseparable, and if we wish to obtain a clear, intelligent appreciation of his works, it is indispensable that we should be before all thoroughly acquainted with at least the main outlines of his life. This is especially true of his poems. The events of Goethe's long career can best be grasped by dividing his life into five principal periods.

I. YOUTH (1749—1775). Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Germany's greatest poet, was born at Frankfort-on-the Maine, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1749. His father, the son of a tailor and grandson of a Thuringian farrier, was a well-educated man, who had travelled considerably in his own country and in Italy — a man of stern, methodical and somewhat pedantic character. At the age of thirty-eight he married Katherina Elisabeth Textor, who was then only seventeen, the daughter of the chief magistrate Wolfgang Textor, and bought the title of Imperial Counsellor, to which, however, no duties were attached. Katherina Textor was a contrast in every

way to her husband, "*simple, hearty, joyous and affectionate*", taking life as it came and enjoying it to the utmost. Difference of years and of character made a really close and confidential union between husband and wife impossible, but the young mother found consolation in lavishing her rich store of affection upon her children, in whom she found more congenial companions, especially in the case of the eldest, Johann Wolfgang, who, as he grew out of infancy, became her playmate and friend: "*I and my Wolfgang*", she said, "*have always held fast to each other, because we were both young together*".

She was not highly educated, but she possessed a happy faculty of assimilation and an exuberant fancy, which she was fond of employing in the invention of stories and fairy tales for the edification of her children. In after years "Frau Aja", as she was then called, became quite a character in German literature, while her friendship was prized by some of the most famous men and women of her time. Many stories are told of her inexhaustible good-humour and ever-ready mother-wit. One of the most famous tells how on receiving an invitation to a party, just prior to her death in 1808, she returned the answer that Madame Goethe could not come, because "*she was just then engaged in dying*".

Although Goethe's childhood and youth owe far more to his mother's direct influence than to all else, it would be wrong to underrate his father's restraining and regulating influence. His well-known lines concerning his ancestry show that he valued his paternal as well as his maternal inheritance.

„*Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,  
Des Lebens ernstes Führen,  
Von Mütterchen die Frohnatur,  
Die Lust zu fabulieren*“,

which Professor Blackie has translated as follows:

*"My goodly frame and earnest soul  
I from my sire inherit;  
My happy heart and glib discourse  
Was my brave mother's merit."*

His early education young Goethe received at home under the careful and strict supervision of his father, only going to a public school for a very short time, while the home in the Hirschgraben was being rebuilt, an operation which seems to have taken up all the father's leisure time. That he was a very precocious child is proved by the fact that at eight years of age he had already made fair progress in French, Italian, Latin and Greek. When he was ten the French troops occupied Frankfort, and Count Thoranc (Goethe calls him Thorane), the King's Lieutenant, was quartered in Goethe's home. This had a great influence on young Wolfgang's future culture. The count, by engaging some of the best painters of Frankfort and Darmstadt to execute pictures for him, was instrumental in developing that taste for art which the boy had inherited from his father, while assiduous attendance at the performances of a French theatrical company, which had followed the invaders, helped to polish his French, and what is more, turned his attention to dramatic literature.

After the war we find him taking up Hebrew, and paying special attention to the Old Testament. These studies, and his relation to the pious Fräulein von Klettenberg, to whom he afterwards raised a lasting monument in the "*Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*", developed in him a religious tendency, to which we owe his earliest productions — a prose epic *Joseph und seine Brüder*, as well as a number of religious odes of which one only, *Die Ode zur Feier der Höllenfahrt Christi*, has been preserved.

He was then only fourteen years of age. At sixteen his father decided to send him to read law at Leipzig, where he himself had acquired his knowledge of Jurisprudence. Instead of studying Justinian and Ulpian, and attending lectures, young Goethe spent his time in the unrestrained society of the "*little Paris*" of Germany, devoting what time he could spare to the study of art, under the direction of the painter Oeser, Winckelmann's teacher. A brief and innocent love-affair with Käthchen Schönkopf, a lively girl of nineteen, the daughter of the landlord of the establishment where he dined daily, may also have tended to distract his attention from law, though it was a gain to his poetry.

It was at Leipzig that he wrote *Die Laune des Verliebten*, the oldest of his extant plays, in which he embodied his relation to Käthchen. This was followed by *Die Mitschuldigen*, which like his first essay betrays the influence of the French Drama, and goes to prove that Goethe had not yet attained literary independence. The same may be said of the Leipzig poems, which are rather the result of the poet's reflection about his feelings than the expression of those feelings themselves. The irregularities of the Leipzig life and probably also poisonous fumes inhaled while engaged in etching on brass, undermined his health, and the autumn of 1768 found him decidedly ill, and compelled to leave for home, where he remained sick and convalescent till April, 1770.

It was during this illness that he became more intimately acquainted with Fräulein von Klettenberg, who, seconded by his physician Dr. Müller, also a person of a pious and mystic turn of mind, encouraged him to take up the study of alchemy and kindred subjects, which proved useful later in the elaboration of *Faust*. When his health was restored, his father was anxious

that Goethe should continue his legal studies and take his degree, and consequently in the spring of 1770 he departed for the Alsatian University of Strassburg. He only remained there a little over a year, but it was, as far as his mental development is concerned, the decisive year of his youth. At Leipzig he had learnt what to avoid; at Strassburg, he came to understand what he had to do. He met there for the first time Herder, who had just published his Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Litteratur and was studying the question of the origin of language. Although Herder was Goethe's senior by only five years, he had reached a much more advanced stage in his intellectual development, and was already fully acquainted with the literary movement of the time. From him Goethe learnt that poetry was a gift of nature, that its finest pearls were to be found in the Volkslieder or primitive songs, and that all poetic development is essentially national. Herder also otherwise widened his literary horizon, taught him to appreciate Shakespeare and Rousseau, and to distrust all artificial literary canons.

In the autumn of 1770, Weyland, a friend of Goethe's, took him one day to visit Pastor Brion of Sesenheim, a pretty Alsatian village in the neighbourhood of Strassburg. Pastor Brion's second daughter, Friederike, who was then in her nineteenth year, captured the poet's heart at first sight, and herself soon passionately returned his love. The outcome of Goethe's love for Friederike was a series of beautiful lyrics — Mit Lieb, Mit einem gemalten Band, Willkommen und Abschied — which by their spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness show that Herder's advice had not been lost. Repeated visits to the country vicarage only served to increase Goethe's passion, but finally the conviction of the unsuitability of a union with the pastor's daughter and

possibly the fear that it might be prejudicial to his own self-development, gained such an ascendancy over him during a longer stay that he decided to abandon Friederike, whose more simple nature never fully recovered from the blow. Such was Goethe's invariable way of proceeding in all his love-affairs, of which he had many, for he was always very susceptible to woman's charms. As soon as he felt that he had exhausted the educational value of such a relation, or indeed of any relation, or that it was likely to interfere with the ideal of high and free humanity which he had proposed to himself, he abandoned it or shook it off. Already at this period we find him writing to his friend Lavater: "*The desire to raise the pyramid of my existence, the base of which is already laid, as high as possible into the air, absorbs every other desire, and scarcely ever leaves me*", and throughout his long life he never wavered in this purpose. It is not our intention to blame or to absolve. The special advocates of Goethe point out that if he had acted otherwise we should have been without "*the most complete exemplar which the world possesses of a career devoted exclusively to self-development*", and that thereby humanity would have been the loser.

Pangs of conscience at his cruel conduct seem to have made Strassburg distasteful to Goethe, and as he had in the meantime taken his degree, he left in August 1771 for Frankfort, where he started practice as a lawyer and remained till May 1772. It was during this sojourn in his native town that he completed in its first form *Die Geschichte Gottfrieds von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand, dramatisiert*, the story of a robber knight of the sixteenth century; and also worked at some of the early scenes of *Faust*. In May 1772, following his father's advice, he migrated to Wetzlar,

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in order to perfect himself in his profession by practising for some time in connection with the Imperial Chamber of Justice. Among the first friends whom Goethe made at Wetzlar were a young jurist named Kestner and his promised bride Charlotte Buff, for whom he conceived a deep passion before he knew of her relation to Kestner. Almost daily intercourse between the two soon transformed this affection into love; Goethe, mindful that Kestner was his friend, and unwilling to act dishonourably by him, took his leave, hastily packed up his belongings and set out on a journey down the Lahn to Ehrenbreitstein, where, in the company of Frau von la Roche and her charming daughter Maximiliane, he sought distraction and peace of mind. When he at length returned to Frankfort, he devoted himself more earnestly to his practice, yet found ample time for literary work. Early in 1773 the original version of *Götz* was remodelled and published in an improved form, and the year after his celebrated romance *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, the background of which is furnished by his relations to Kestner and Charlotte Buff. These two works mark an epoch, not only in Goethe's literary development, but in the whole of German literature. They are the direct fruits of the „*Sturm und Drangperiode*” or “*Period of Storm and Stress*”, and each typifies one of its two main characteristics. In *Götz* we have the healthy side — longing for action, force and naturalness in moral as well as social life; on the other hand *Werther* represents the morbid side — sentimental yearning for nature, and the cult of unbridled, but timid, irresolute and self-consuming passion. At one stroke *Götz* established Goethe's position as the foremost among German writers; a host of plays in the same manner appeared, and the fame of the “*Sorrows of Werther*” spread far beyond the limits

## XVIII Summary of Goethe's Life and Works.

of Germany. Apart from the intrinsic value of the book, the popularity of this work was due to the fact that it voiced a sentiment well-nigh universal throughout Europe at the time — disgust with life, or „*Welt-schmerz*” to call it by its more significant name. So great was the flow of sentimental poetry called forth in Germany by *Werther* that Goethe thought fit at a later date to check this tendency, and held it up to ridicule in the Triumph der Empfindsamkeit. It was in 1773 also that Goethe composed the dramatic satires *Pater Breh*, *Satyrös* and *Das Jahrmarktsfest zu Blundersweilern*, besides the prose farce, *Götter, Helden und Wieland*, in which he brings out the contrast between antique vigour and modern sentimentality.

Another “*confession*” was embodied by Goethe in the tragedy of *Clavigo* (1774), for in the hero we recognise Goethe himself, as partly also in the faithless Weislingen in *Götz*. This time it was the wrong he had done to Friederike Brion that he was doing penance for. He also began the tragedy of *Egmont*, and composed a series of beautiful odes in free irregular rhythm — *Mahomets Gesang*, *Prometheus*, *Adler und Taube*, *An Schwager Kronos*. This fruitful literary activity, however, was destined to be interrupted by another tender relation, this time to a rich and beautiful girl, Elizabeth Schönemann, generally known as Lili, who was only sixteen when Goethe fell a victim to her charms. There is no doubt that Lili was passionately fond of her admirer, yet she had none of the meekness and devotion of the rustic Friederike, but rather took a delight in exercising her power over her lover by making him dance attendance on her at balls and dinner parties, a task which was abhorrent to the young and unconventional poet. Goethe, for whom this was a new experience, soon grew tired of his servitude;

jealousy, too, led to quarrels and reconciliations which rendered all work an impossibility. To free himself from the strain Goethe had recourse to his usual remedy in such cases; he fled from Lili, and accepted an invitation to accompany his friends the Counts Stolberg to Switzerland; but on his return he found himself no nearer peace than before, and a second invitation, this time from the Duke of Weimar, came as a veritable godsend.

During the years 1773—1775 Goethe had been occupied at different times on *Faust*, that life-work of his, the idea of which was already in his mind as early as 1769. In this Pre-Weimarian *Faust* the tragic story of Gretchen had overshadowed all else in the poet's interest, although he had incidentally intercalated a few of the reminiscences of his early academic life at Leipzig. Thus the early *Faust* had its origin in the most fervid period of Goethe's youthful storm and stress, being contemporary with *Götz* and *Berlher*. After the settlement in Weimar there is no evidence of progress upon *Faust* for fully twelve years.

II. WEIMAR DOWN TO THE ITALIAN JOURNEY (1775—1786). In Weimar, where he arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1775, Goethe was immediately lionised, largely because of his beauty and the winning manners which he preserved till the end of his days, although a certain party did not hesitate to make capital by exaggerating his occasional excesses, and his escapades in company with the young Duke at court festivities and rural excursions. The Duke, who was anxious not to lose him, appointed him Privy Councillor with a salary of 1200 thalers a year, and strange as it may seem for a poet, he made an excellent official, both in that capacity, and later as Minister of Roads and Bridges or President of the Chamber. If all these

experiences were important for his future development, still more so was his friendship with Frau von Stein, the wife of the Master of the Horse, which dates from the first days of 1776. Charlotte von Stein was not a beauty, but she was the first woman whom Goethe had known intimately who was capable of understanding and sympathizing with his struggles and aspirations. Through his relation to her, a relation which he himself has described as "*the purest, fairest, truest, in which he ever stood to any woman, except his sister*", he completely shook off, both mentally and morally, the trammels of the wild "*Period of Storm and Stress*", and achieved that purity, self-control and resignation so characteristic of his subsequent literary productions. For some time she represented for him a combination of qualities which he sought to reproduce in his poetry, a womanly ideal which corresponded to a certain ideal in art. This is seen most clearly in *Sphigenie* and in *Lotto*.

**III. FROM THE ITALIAN JOURNEY TILL THE FRIENDSHIP WITH SCHILLER (1786—1794).** Practical life had its useful side no doubt, but when Goethe perceived that he had learnt from it all he wanted to know, and that a busy statesman could find no time to perfect himself in a higher art, he decided to leave for Italy, the land he had yearned to see ever since his childhood, and where he hoped to possess his soul in peace. Taking with him several unfinished manuscripts and meditating a number of literary plans which he hoped to mature there, he stole away from Carlsbad on the third of September 1786; travelling by Verona, Vicenza and Padua he reached Venice, and on the first of November wrote from Rome: "*Now I shall be at peace for the rest of my days; for a man can say that he is beginning*

*a new life, when he sees with his own eyes and in its entirety what he has for a long time only studied by bits. All the dreams of my youth are becoming realities . . .*

The winter was passed at Rome in the company of painters and artists; then he started for Naples (Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1787) and went the round of Sicily, where he conceived the plan of a Homeric tragedy, *Mausitaa*, of which he never wrote more than a few scenes. In June of the same year he returned to Rome, and stayed there for nearly a year more. During his two stays in the Eternal City he recast the prose version of the tragedy *Sphigenie auf Tauris*, written in 1779, into the purest iambic pentameters, and finally revised *Egmont*, which he had already finished in 1782, but not to his satisfaction. He also occupied himself with new versions of his comic operas, *Claudine von Villa Bella*, and *Erwin und Elmire*, besides adding two scenes to *Faust* (*Herkenrüche?* and *Wald und Höhle*), and rewriting completely another "*child of sorrow*", the great tragical drama *Torquato Tasso*, which was only finished at Weimar in the year 1789. In June 1788, Goethe again turned his face northwards, after an absence of nearly two years. It is no exaggeration to say that the Italian Journey marks the most important epoch in his literary and moral development. By living over again, so to speak, the conditions and influences which had determined classical art, he made it a part of his own nature, and at the same time learnt the true value of poetic form. Henceforth the classical ideal will combine or go hand in hand with the Gothic inheritance.

For some time after his return Goethe felt painfully the contrast between the small Thuringian provincial capital and the land of his freedom; moreover his

surroundings had not advanced with him; he and his friends no longer understood each other, and he felt the need of love and sympathy. In this frame of mind he met and fell in love with Christiane Vulpius, a girl of humble rank, the daughter of a small Weimar official, "*a pretty maiden, with a full round face, beautiful hair, small nose, pouting lips, and little dancing feet*". For many years Goethe and Christiane lived together as man and wife, but it was not till 1806, that they went through the ceremony of marriage. A result of their relation are the Römisches Elegien (1788), the epithalamium to his bride, which, along with the Venetianische Epigramme (1790), freely reveal his feelings for Christiane. The same year Goethe published the Faust Fragment, many scenes of the primitive Faust being withheld and a few added, so as to make the whole intelligible, and bring it into harmony with the final plan as it now existed in his mind. Three years later (1793) he produced his version of the old German poem Reineke Fuchs.

**IV. GOETHE'S FRIENDSHIP WITH SCHILLER (1794—1805).** Already in 1788 Goethe had met Schiller, but still without feeling attracted by one whom he probably looked upon as a representative of the violent and declamatory „Sturm- und Drangperiode”, which he had himself long ago left behind. It was not till 1794 that a literary enterprise, Die Horen, brought them into closer contact. Schiller had written to invite Goethe's collaboration; he accepted, and in a memorable conversation that took place between the two a few days later at Jena, Goethe found that the younger poet had in the meantime, through the assiduous study of history and philosophy, reached the same goal as himself, and that they had been pursuing the same

ideals, though by different paths. From this time forth they saw much of each other; a beautiful friendship, founded upon mutual respect and community of ideas, sprang up between them, that continued untroubled till Schiller's death in 1805, and of which we have a record in their "*Correspondence*", published by Goethe in 1827. The immediate result of this union was to bring them back to poetry, which for some time they had both forsaken — Goethe by expansion had become richer but less strong, whereas Schiller by concentrating his powers had strengthened but impoverished himself. They soon found, however, that if they wished to set up new and nobler literary standards, they must first clear away all that was false and mean in literature. With that aim they launched in 1796 the Xenien, a series of epigrams, which appeared in the Musenalmanach (1796—1800), another periodical started by Schiller. The sensation was great in the opposite camp, and many rejoinders made their appearance, but few of the retorts on the authors of the cruel distiches "*rose above tame wit and low sentiment*". During the next year (1797), the "Galladenjahr", they both confined their attention almost exclusively to the composition of a series of ballads and romances — the most beautiful in the German language, of which Goethe's share was Der Zauberlehrling, Der Schatzgräber, Die Braut von Corinth and Gott und die Bajadere. The same year Goethe finished his novel Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, which he had begun twenty years before, and of which the first six books had already been written before the Italian Journey. He also resumed work on Faust, urged on by Schiller, who saw in it the "*torso of a Hercules*", and encouraged by their common ballad-study, which, as Goethe puts it, had brought him back to the "*misty, foggy path*",

while in the spring of 1797 he brought out the beautiful idyllic epic, *Hermann und Dorothea*, described by Schiller as "*the topmost pinnacle of Goethe's and all our modern art*". His source was an old chronicle detailing the incidents which occurred during the Protestant emigration from Strassburg in 1731, but by transferring the time of action to the period of the French invasion of Germany, he gave the events much greater significance, and provided the wide historical background indispensable to an epic poem. During the last years of the XVIII<sup>th</sup>, and the first years of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, while Schiller was producing one dramatic masterpiece after another, Goethe was comparatively inactive, most of his time being taken up with scientific studies, yet he found time to extend the repertoire of the Weimar Court Theatre by translating plays of Voltaire (*Mahomet* and *Tancred*), and also wrote *Die natürliche Tochter*, the first part of a trilogy in which he intended to depict the whole development of the French Revolution.

V. GOETHE'S OLD AGE (1805—1832). The death of Schiller in 1805, struck a blow from which Goethe only gradually recovered, and although he displayed extraordinary activity in other fields, especially in that of science, during the ~~remaining twenty-seven~~ years of his life he seemed to miss the encouragement of his friend, and wrote proportionately little poetry — "*the half of my existence is gone from me*", he wrote to his friend Zelter.

The first of the more important works which fall within this period is the completed First Part of *Faust*, which as we have noticed, was begun as early as 1773. On to the early Gretchen-tragedy and academic scenes Goethe had gradually grafted the old Faust-legend, and brought out the striking contrast between

two conceptions of life, between the spirit of irony and negation represented by Mephistopheles, and that of ceaseless striving towards the ideal as personified in Faust. Next after Faust in point of time comes *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (Elective Affinities), 1809, in which Goethe shows how the happiness of life is destroyed as soon as the bonds of morality are loosened. This was followed by the first part of his autobiography, *Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811), enlarged in subsequent years, but which only includes the first twenty-six years of his life — the Pre-Weimarian period. The very title of the book is a warning that we are not to take everything it contains literally, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* being above all a work of art. The story of his life is supplemented by the *Italienische Reise*, the *Dritte Schweizerreise*, the *Campagne in Frankreich*, as well as by the *Tag- und Jahreshefte*.

The chief interest of his biography about this time is to be found in his attitude towards the political events which were then agitating Europe. When in 1813 the national uprising took place against the French, Goethe held aloof, leaving to younger poets the task of composing patriotic war-songs. Some have charged him with want of patriotism, but his characteristic answer to Soret shows that he was merely remaining faithful to one of his leading principles: "I have never affected anything in poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me on to production. I have composed love-songs when I loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating?" Goethe's only attempt at patriotic poetry was the cold allegory *Des Epimenides Erwachen*, written in celebration of the return of the Prussian troops in 1815. He preferred to take refuge in the calm symbolism of the poetry of the East, which

suited better the contemplative turn of his mind. In 1819 appeared the *Westöstlicher Divan*, written mainly in 1814 and 1815, in imitation of the *Divan* of the Persian poet Hafiz. Certain outward peculiarities in rhythm and language give these charming lyrics an Oriental flavour, but in spirit they are wholly German. What strikes one most in them is the freshness of inspiration and warmth of feeling in a man of seventy years of age.

Of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1821) Goethe's next work, it may be said that it is dreary reading to most and that it is absolutely lacking in artistic unity, although its profound thought will reward those who give themselves the trouble to penetrate its unattractive exterior.

Not till very near the end of his life, his eighty-second year, was his life-work finished and the goal of his hopes attained in the completion of *Faust*, a task which had occupied him for sixty years, and in which he had embodied the whole of his philosophy. In the Second Part of *Faust* the hero is made to continue the development begun in the First Part, and after passing through various experiences, to conclude that real happiness can only be found in true devotion to humanity and self-forgetful labour for the common weal.

With this work Goethe considered his life's task concluded: "*Henceforth I look upon my life purely as a gift*", said he to his secretary Eckermann, as he sealed the packet containing the completed manuscript. A few months later he was taken ill, and very shortly afterwards, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1832, he passed away quietly and without a struggle. His last words were: "*Light! more light!*"

## II. A.

### OUTLINES OF GERMAN METRE.

This brief consideration of the general principles of poetic structure will be divided into three parts, dealing successively with: 1) the Foot, 2) the Verse, 3) Rime, Alliteration, Assonance, Enjambement, Caesura, Hiatus.

#### 1. THE FOOT.

In speaking of metrical feet it is still found convenient to use the classical terms, iambus, dactyl etc., though the feet thus designated no longer correspond to the classical feet, but have merely an external resemblance to them. While the classical feet thus termed were various combinations of long and short syllables, the corresponding Germanic feet which commonly pass by the same names are simply combinations of accented and unaccented syllables.

No less clear a distinction must be drawn between the principles of Germanic and Romance metre; in Romance versification syllabism being the essential principle, the syllables of a line are reckoned neither by long and short as in the classical languages, nor by stress as in the Germanic, but are simply counted. This being clearly understood, the use of these well-

known and generally accepted terms is of great convenience, and is in no danger of leading to confusion.

**THE IAMBUS** (˘ ˘) (Greek *iambos* from *iapto*, to assail, because originally the metre of satire) consists of an unaccented followed by an accented syllable. The following words form iambic feet: *vielleicht, erholt*.

**THE TROCHEE** (˘ ˘) (Greek *trochaios*, running, the running foot) is the reverse of the iambus, and consists of an accented followed by an unaccented syllable: *morgen, warte*.

**THE DACTYL** (˘ ˘ ˘) (Greek *daktylos*, a finger) consists of an accented followed by two unaccented syllables: *Märtyrer, hoffentlich*.

**THE ANAPAESIT** (˘ ˘ ˘) (Greek *anapaistos*, reversed) is the reverse of the Dactyl: *unterwegs, unverfehrt*.

**THE SPONDEE** (˘ ˘) (from the Greek *sponde*, a drink-offering, because the verse used at libations) consists of two accented syllables, and is rarely present in German words, the only instances being certain compound words with fluctuating stress: *Steinstag, Försthaus*; and certain other words which for the sake of emphasis can be pronounced with fluctuating stress: *furchtbar*.

Into a discussion of the alleged modern equivalents of more complicated and unusual classical feet it is unnecessary to enter, as such classification is in the case of a rhythmical language like German purely artificial. Such imitation classical verses are almost

without exception of little poetical value, and are fortunately rare.

On the other hand the purely rhythmical lines in which a fixed number of accented syllables (*Hebungen*<sup>1</sup>) is accompanied by a varying number of unaccented syllables (*Senfungen*) are in accordance with the fundamental principle of all Germanic languages, and require no such artificial classification. In the oldest German literature these free rhythmical lines were the only existing poetic form, and it was only due to the influence of Romance literature that verses began to be written in which a strict alternation of *Hebung* and *Senfung* was observed. The *Minnesänger*, the most famous of whom was Walther von der Vogelweide (circa 1170—1230), under the influence of the *Troubadours* by whom they were inspired, adopted this Romance syllabic regularity, but without doing violence to the spirit of the German language, verse accent and prose accent being with them in the main identical. The *Meistersänger* by whom they were followed carried this principle still further, and introduced largely pure syllabism into German verse. Their most noteworthy representative was Hans Sachs (1494—1576). It has been customary to regard his verses as being purely artificial, with a regular alternation of *Hebung* and *Senfung*, verse and prose accent being regularly at variance, in defiance of the spirit of the language, and regardless of the fundamental difference between Germanic and Romance languages. It is however the opinion of many eminent modern scholars, and one which is rapidly gaining ground, that this regularity was only for the

<sup>1</sup>) We shall use throughout the term *Hebung* for a stress syllable or *arsis*, and *Senfung* for an unaccented syllable or *thesis*.

eye, the lines being read as rhythmical lines with four *Hebungen*, and a free arrangement of *Senfungen*, while still another possibility is that the number of syllables (eight in verses with masculine, nine in those with feminine endings) was the only fixed principle with him, and that within the verse not only the position of the *Senfungen*, but even the number of *Hebungen*, was absolutely free and unrestrained.

The first to oppose the false prosody of the *Meistersänger* was Martin Opitz (1597—1639), who in his *Buch der deutschen Poeterei* (1624) taught that the measuring of syllables by accent, and not the counting of syllables, was the only true poetic principle in German, and that *Hebung* and *Senfung* must take the place of classical long and short, quality the place of quantity. The service he rendered in this way by restoring to its own the ancient Germanic principle was great, though he did not reinstate that principle in all its rights and privileges, as he only allowed a regular alternation of *Hebung* and *Senfung*. The natural consequence of this regular alternation of stressed and unstressed is a fixed number of syllables in the verse, and in this limited sense it is legitimate to apply to the regular type of German verse the names of Romance verses, such as *Alexandrine*, and *vers commun*.

Since Opitz's time this more regular poetic structure which had arisen, as described, under Romance influence, has remained firmly established, and is the form of by far the largest proportion of German verse; while side by side with it to-day there exist free rhythms, restored by Herder (1744—1803) and Klopstock (1724—1803), as in the older German literature. This duality of principle in modern German prosody being realised, it will be clearly seen that we can apply to the one class the classical terms with advantage, while it would be

as meaningless to apply them to the other as to apply the term iambic to a French Alexandrine. Each of these two principles will be discussed separately, under the headings *Regular Metres* and *Irregular Metres* respectively.

## 2. THE VERSE.

### A. REGULAR METRES.

The principal verse-forms are called after the feet of which they are composed respectively: Iambic, Trochaic, Dactylic, Anapaestic, Spondaic, Trochaic-dactylic, Iambic-anapaestic etc.

**IAMBIC VERSE.** The Iambic Pentameter is the commonest form of Iambic Verse.

The *Rimed Iambic Pentameter* was introduced from the French in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century by Opitz (1597—1639), in imitation of the *vers commun*. Like its prototype it has either masculine or feminine rime, and a fixed caesura<sup>1)</sup> after the second foot. The scheme<sup>2)</sup> is:

$\times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \parallel \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x}$  ( $\times$ )

In this form it was subsequently abandoned by Opitz himself, and has since only been sparingly used, on account of its intolerable monotony.

The rimed Iambic Pentameter has found much greater favour in its Italian dress, as the so-called Italian Iambic Pentameter, generally but not invariably with feminine rime, and with a varying caesura, after the fourth or sixth syllable in masculine lines, and after the fifth or seventh in feminine lines.

<sup>1)</sup> For an explanation of the term *caesura*, see page L.

<sup>2)</sup> The sign ' indicates a stressed syllable, the sign  $\times$  an unstressed syllable, and the sign ` a syllable with a secondary accent.

The Italian Iambic Pentameter is most commonly used in the strophe of eight lines with certain fixed arrangements of the rime (cf. *Ottava Rima* page LVI).

It was already recommended in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century by Filip von Zesen (1619—1689), but not acclimatised till the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century by Wieland, Heinse, and notably by Goethe, with whom it was a favourite metre.

The *Unrimed Iambic Pentameter* with shifting caesura was borrowed from England, where, under the name of *Blank Verse*, it had been the standard dramatic line since the Elizabethan times. In Germany it was already applied in translations from the English as early as the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, but its predominance, as the standard German dramatic line, dates from Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (1779).

It is also used in narrative and didactic poetry.

So seid ihr es doch ganz und gar, mein Vater?  
 Ich glaubt', ihr hättet eure Stimme nur  
 Voraußgeschickt. Wo bleibt ihr? Was für Berge,  
 Für Wüsten, was für Ströme trennen uns  
 Denn noch? Ihr atmet Wand an Wand mit ihr,  
 Und eilt nicht, eure Necha zu umarmen?  
 Die arme Necha, die indes verbrannte!  
 Fast, fast verbrannte! Fast nur, schaudert nicht!  
 Es ist ein garst'ger Tod, verbrennen. O!

Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*.

Lessing's blank verse is not as perfect as that of Goethe and Schiller:

So manches Jahr bewahrt mich hier verborgen  
 Ein hoher Wille, dem ich mich ergebe.  
 Doch immer bin ich wie im ersten fremd.  
 Denn, ach, mich trennt das Meer von den Geliebten,  
 Und an dem Ufer steh' ich lange Tage,  
 Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend;

Und gegen meine Seufzer bringt die Welle  
Kur dumpfe Töne brausend mir herüber.

Goethe: *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

Of the other iambic verses the most famous, and second only in the frequency of its use, is the *Alexandrine*, which is composed of six iambic feet consisting of twelve syllables, and is furnished with rime. The caesura is generally placed after the sixth syllable and is masculine. Its scheme is as follows:

$\times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times} || \times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times} \times \dot{\times}$  (x)

This verse, which is of French origin, was so called from the *Roman d'Alexandre*, written in the second half of the XII<sup>th</sup> century, although the metre occurs previously in French literature.

It made its way rapidly in French literature, soon won the supremacy in dramatic poetry, and from the Renaissance became the favourite of all metrical forms. Comparatively rare in English, the Alexandrine plays a much more important rôle in German literature. Introduced at the beginning of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, it was raised to great importance by Opitz, and in the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries was one of the most frequently employed. The XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, however, witnessed the end of its vogue. It was replaced in the epic by the Hexameter, chiefly owing to Klopstock's *Messias* (1748), and in the drama by the unrimed Iambic Pentameter, through the influence of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (1779).

It was last used in the drama by Gotter in his *Alzire* (1783).

The following is an example of the Alexandrine from Gottsched's *Der sterbende Cato* (1732):

Und wozu war dir wohl das Vaterland verbunden?

Du hastest als ein Held viel Länder überwunden;

(M 961)

C

Nom hatte triumphiert: doch das war deine Pflicht.  
Ein Bürger dient dem Staat, der Staat dem Bürger nicht.

The *Iambic Septenarius* or siebenfüßige Jambus consists of seven iambic feet, with a masculine caesura after the fourth foot:

$\times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \parallel \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x}$  (×)

The measure has never been much in favour. It appears for the first time in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century. In modern times it has been taken up by Wilhelm Müller (1794—1827), Justinus Kerner (1786—1862) and especially by Platen (1796—1835), notably in the *Verhängnisvolle Gabel* (1826):

Wie kommt es, liebes Publikum || daß du die größten Geister  
So oft verkennt und stets verbannst || die sonst berühmten  
Meister?

So ist bei dir der Rögebau || in Miszkredit gekommen.  
Der sonst doch ganz allein beinah || die Bretter eingenommen.

The *Iambic Octonarius* or achtfüßige Jambus consists of eight iambic feet, and falls into two equal parts divided by a caesura:

$\times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \parallel \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x} \times \acute{x}$  (×)

It occurs for the first time in the Sonnets of A. Gryphius (1616—1664). Among modern poets examples are found in the works of Platen and of Wilhelm Müller:

Es muß auf Erden jeder Mensch || sein Bärchen Narren-  
schuh vertragen:  
Doch mancher läßt mit Eisen sich || die Sohlen um und  
um beschlagen.

W. Müller.

The *Iambic Trimeter* or *Senarius* consists of six iambic feet, and is comparatively recent in German literature. It is rimeless, and has a variable feminine

caesura after the third or fourth foot.



Although the Iambic Trimeter, which was the metre of the Greek drama, consists of six feet, it is called *trimeter*, because in certain Greek metres a couple of feet are required to make up one measure.

Examples of this metre are found in the second Part of *Faust*, and in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* and *Braut von Messina*.

The *Shorter Iambic lines* (of four, three and two feet) are also found.

A combination of Iambic lines of four and three feet is known as *Ballad Metre*:

Es war ein Kind, das wollte nie  
Zur Kirche sich bequemen,  
Und Sonntags fand es stets ein Wie  
Den Weg ins Feld zu nehmen.

Goethe: *Die wandelnde Glöde* (No. 41).

**TROCHAIC VERSE.** The *Trochaic Octonarius* or *Tetrameter*, consists either of eight complete trochees if the rime is feminine, or if the rime is masculine it is catalectic. In both cases it has the caesura after the fourth foot. The scheme is:



The Tetrameter, while being an imitation of the Greek metre, has features which make it practically a new form.

This measure, though already used in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, has only reached perfection in modern times, and has been handled with great skill by Platen, and later by Freiligrath (1810—1876):

Platen: Das Grab im Busento.

Of all Trochaic Metres the most commonly used is the *Trochaic Line of Four Feet* (*vierfüßige Trochäen*), which should not be called *Tetrameter*, that name being reserved for the trochaic line of eight feet described above.

The line of four trochaic feet is of twofold origin, according as it is employed with or without rime.

In the *rimed form* it was much favoured in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century by the so-called Anacreontic School (Gleim, Uz etc.) of German poets, and employed more especially for short compositions. Goethe employed it in this way, but Schiller applied it to longer poems:

In dem Hain erwachen wieder  
Und die Dreade spricht:  
Deine Blumen kehren wieder,  
Deine Tochter kehret nicht.

## Schiller: Klage der Ceres.

In the *unrimed form* it has been used in the epic and occasionally in the drama, as the equivalent of the Spanish trochaic line of four feet of the Romances, as, for example, in Herder's *Cid* (1805):

Trauerndtief saß Don Diego,  
Wohl war keiner je so traurig;  
Gramvoll dacht' er Tag und Nächte  
Nur an seines Hauses Schmach.

In English literature, in which the trochee is comparatively rare, it is found in Longfellow's *Hiaawatha*,

an instance of a long poem written entirely in unrimed trochaic lines of four feet:

Downward through the evening twilight,  
In the days that are forgotten,  
In the unremembered ages,  
From the full moon fell Nokomis.

Although trochaic verses of from one to eight feet occur, the only other verse of any importance is the *Trochaic Line of Five Feet* (fünffüßige Tropäen) of which the scheme is as follows.

$\acute{\text{x}} \times \acute{\text{x}} \times \acute{\text{x}} \times \acute{\text{x}} \times \acute{\text{x}} (\times)$

It must also be considered in the rimed and unrimed form.

In the *rimed form* it is already current in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, but did not reach any degree of perfection till Goethe's and Schiller's time:

Horch, die Glocken hallen dumpf zusammen  
Und der Geiger hat vollbracht den Lauf.  
Nun so sei's denn! Nun in Gottes Namen!  
Grabgefährten brecht zum Richtplatz auf.

Schiller: *Die Kindesmörderin*.

This metre is best known in the *unrimed form*, called *Servian Trochees*, because it was borrowed, principally by Germany, at the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century from Servian ballad and popular poetry. It was employed by Herder and by Goethe, and has since remained a favourite.

Tage kommen, Tage ziehn vorüber.  
Lambra sitzt am Herd und dreht die Spindel,  
Ihren Flachs mit heißen Tränen feuchtend,  
Und im Garten, wo die Feigen reisen,  
Spielt im Gras die blonde Theodula.

Geibel: *Die Blutrache*.

It is very rarely found in English poetry, except in translations, as for example in Aytoun's rendering of Goethe's *Flaggesang von den edeln Frauen des Asan Aga*, of which the first few lines run as follows.

What is yon so white beside the greenwood?  
 Is it snow, or flight of cygnets resting?  
 Were it snow, ere now it had been melted;  
 Were it swans, ere now the flock had left us.  
 Neither snow, nor swans, are resting yonder,  
 'Tis the glittering tents of Asan Aga etc.

*Shorter Trochaic Lines* are uncommon, being found more especially in the poetry of the Anacreontics.

**DACTYLIC VERSE.** First and foremost among dactylic, and one of the most important of all metres, is the *Hexameter*.

The Hexameter consists of six feet with at least one caesura, the position of which in the line is variable, though it is found most frequently in the third foot, either after the *Hebung* or after the first *Senkung* following the *Hebung*.

Although dactyls preponderate, a considerable variety is possible in the framework of this kind of verse. The fifth foot alone remains constant, in the first four the dactyl may be replaced by a spondee, while the final foot is usually a spondee, not infrequently, however, a trochee. Rime is never used in the Hexameter. The scheme is as follows:



The part played by the Hexameter as the epic verse in the classical languages is well-known, and it is only necessary to consider the part played by that measure in German literature.

In English literature the Hexameter has been frequently attempted, rarely with much success. The opinion of one great poet of our own times on the adaptability of the Hexameter in English is expressed in the lines:

These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!

No — but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in  
England?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?  
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

Tennyson: *On Translations of Homer.*

The statement contained in the last two lines few competent judges would, however, assent to, in spite of a somewhat similar and not less scathing attack on the Hexameters and Pentameters of Goethe and Schiller, written by Voss as a counterblast to the *Xenien*:

In Weimar und in Jena schreibt man Hexameter wie der,  
Aber die Pentameter sind doch noch excellenter.

Schiller expresses his appreciation of the form in the distich:

Schwindelnd trägt er dich fort auf rastlos strömenden Wogen,  
Hinter dir siehst du, du siehst vor dir nur Himmel und Meer.  
while August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767—1845) speaks of the

Hexameter immer sich selbst gleich,  
Ob er zum Kampf des heroischen Lieds unermüdlich sich gürtet,  
Oder, der Weisheit voll, Lehrsprüche den Hörenden einprägt,  
Oder geselliger Hirten Idyllien lieblich umflüstert.

The introduction of the Hexameter is undoubtedly a great gain for German poetry, and in the hands of several modern poets, and for various poetic purposes, it has been used with the happiest effect.

The earliest writers of Hexameters, both in England and Germany, sought to base their reproductions of this classical measure on quantity. Such attempts, constructed as they were on a principle altogether foreign to Germanic versification, were bound to end in failure.

Clumsy attempts to write German hexameters on the accentual principle appear indeed as early as 1679, but the first to write tolerable hexameters on this principle, and to recommend their adoption by German poets, was Gottsched (1700—1766), who may thus truly be described as the founder of the German Hexameter. In his *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst* (1730), after giving specimens himself, he says: "*As Milton in England has been able to write an entire heroic poem without rimes, which is now applauded by the whole nation, it would not be impossible even in German for a great intellect to bring something new into vogue. I am convinced that, if Opitz had left any example of this kind, he would have been frequently followed therein without hesitation*". Klopstock, while a student at Leipzig, was incited to make the attempt in his epic *Der Messias*, the first three cantos of which were published in 1748, and won such extraordinary success that from that day the Hexameter completely ousted the Alexandrine as the German Epic or Heroic Verse. Soon after it was taken up by Voss in his *Luisa* (1795), by Schiller, and by Goethe in *Steinele Fuchs* and in *Hermann und Dorothea*, of which the opening lines are as follows:

Hab' ich den Markt und die Straßen doch nie so einsam  
gesehen!  
Ist doch die Stadt wie gekehrt! Wie ausgestorben!  
Nicht funzig,  
Deucht mir, blieben zurück von allen unseren Bewohnern.

Was die Neugier nicht thut! So rennt und läuft nun  
ein jeder,  
Um den traurigen Zug der armen Vertrieb'nen zu sehen.

The Hexameter has found less favour with more modern poets. It was recommended for shorter poems by Platen, whose Hexameters are certainly the most polished in German literature.

Of dactylic verse the next in importance to the Hexameter is the *Pentameter*, which consists of a long line, divided equally into two halves by a fixed medial caesura, each half-line containing three dactylic feet, the last foot of each half-line being catalectic, i. e. represented only by its first and accented syllable. The scheme is as follows:



The dactyls of the first half-line may be replaced by spondees, but never those of the second half-line.

The Pentameter, which is also rimeless, can never stand alone, but always follows a Hexameter, as the second part of a Distich, as in the following example from Platen's *Epigramme*, referring to Goethe's Hexameters in the epic of *Hermann und Dorothea*:

Holpricht ist der Hexameter zwar; doch wird das Gedicht  
stets  
Bleiben der Stolz Deutschlands, bleiben die Perle der  
Kunst.

*Shorter Dactylic lines* are rare. The following strophe is an example of such:

Annchen von Thorau ist, die mir gefällt,  
Sie ist mein Leben, mein Gut und mein Geld!  
Annchen von Thorau hat wieder ihr Herz  
Auf mich gerichtet in Lieb' und in Schmerz;  
Annchen von Thorau, mein Reichtum, mein Gut,  
Du meine Seele, mein Fleisch und mein Blut.

Hörder: Stimmen der Völker in Liedern.

**ANAPAESTIC VERSE**, which is more uncommon in German than in English, was practically unknown before the advent of the Romantic School, at the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It is used with the license that the dissyllabic introductory *Sentung* or *thesis* ( $\times \times \acute{x}$ ) can be replaced by a monosyllabic *Sentung* ( $\times \acute{x}$ ), in the same way that in the Hexameter  $\acute{x} \times$  is allowed by the side of  $\acute{x} \times \times$ . The most usual anapaestic line is that of four feet.

( $\times$ )  $\times \acute{x} \times \times \acute{x} \times \times \acute{x} \times \times \acute{x}$  ( $\times$ )

The following example is taken from Goethe's *Pandora*:

Sie steiget hernieder in tausend Gebilden,  
Sie schwebet auf Wassern, sie schreitet auf Gefilden,  
Nach heiligen Massen erglänzt sie und schallt,  
Und einzig veredelt die Form den Gehalt,  
Verleiht ihm, verleiht sich die höchste Gewalt,  
Mir erschien sie in Jugend-, in Frauengestalt.

The following is an example of anapaestic verse in English:

Rise, O Muse, in the wrath of thy rapture divine,  
And sweep with a finger of awe every line,  
Till it tremble and burn as thine own glances burn,  
Through the vision thou kindlest! wherein I discern  
All the unconscious cruelty hid in the heart  
Of mankind; all the limitless grief we impart  
Unawares to each other; the limitless wrong  
We inflict without heed, as we hurry along  
In this boisterous pastime of life. So we toy  
With the infinite! So in our sport we destroy etc.

Lytton.

**SPONDAIC VERSE** does not exist as a separate form, the spondaic foot being only used in combination with others, as for instance in the Hexameter and the

Pentameter (q. v.), in both of which it plays an important part.

The combination of different metres in the same verse is only possible with those which are essentially similar, that is, either both ascending (**IAMBIC-ANAPAESTIC**) or both descending rhythms (**TROCHAIC-DACTYLIC**). An example of Iambic-Anapaestic verse is:

Nach Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadier'  
Die waren in Russland gefangen.  
Und als sie kamen ins deutsche Quartier  
Sie ließen die Köpfe hängen.

Heine: *Die Grenadiere.*

The following verses are Trochaic-Dactylic:

Trocknet nicht, trocknet nicht  
Tränen der ewigen Liebe!  
Ach! und dem halb getrockneten Auge  
Wie öde, wie tot die Welt ihm erscheint!  
Trocknet nicht, trocknet nicht  
Tränen unglücklicher Liebe.

Goethe: *Wonne der Wehmuth.*

**FREE VERSES** is the name applied to the combination with one another of lines of different length. The freedom and irregularity consist not in the character of the individual verses, but in their relation to one another. Free Verses were employed in Germany from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, especially in translations of La Fontaine's Fables, in the fables of Gellert and Lessing, and by Wieland. Goethe also employs them both early and late, especially in the combination with Alexandrines of shorter Iambic verses.

'Kalis von Bagdad', spricht der Ritter  
Mit edlem Stolz, 'Läßt alles schweigen hier,  
Und höre mich!' Es liegt schon lange schwer auf mir,

Karls Auftrag und mein Wort. Des Schicksals Zwang  
 Doch seiner Oberherrlichkeit [ ist bitter;  
 Sich zu entziehn, wo ist die Macht auf Erden?  
 Was es zu tun, zu leiden uns gebeut,  
 Das muß getan, das muß gelitten werden.

Wieland: Oberon.

### B. IRREGULAR METRES.

Lastly we must consider the purely Rhythical Verses which have no regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables, but which are measured only by the number of stressed syllables (*Hebungen*), between which stand an irregular number of unstressed syllables (*Senkungen*), while sometimes the *Senfung* fails altogether.

This rhythmical form is, as we have seen, purely Germanic in origin. In the modern literature it exists in two different forms, the so-called *Rnittelverse*, and the Free Rhythms proper. The difference between the two is that in the *Rnittelverse* the variation in the *Senkungen* is less marked; there is a fixed number of *Hebungen*, and a closer approximation to a formally metrical scheme, generally Iambic, while in the Free Rhythms the structure is purely rhythmical and the alternation of *Hebung* and *Senfung* depends solely on the ear and inspiration of the poet. Further the *Rnittelverse* are rimed, whereas the Free Rhythms are generally rimeless. Apart then from the historical point of view, we might almost describe the modern *Rnittelverse* as a special and particular form of Free Rhythms, less free and irregular than the Free Rhythms properly so called. We will now discuss the two forms separately and in detail.

**FREE RHYTHMS** (*Freie Rhythmen*) are not to be confused with Free Verses. They may or may not be Free Verses as well as Free Rhythms, that is to say, the number of *Hebungen* may or may not be the same in all the verses, but the freedom here lies within the verse itself, the number of *Senfungen* between the *Hebungen* varying or even being altogether absent as the case may be.

The great representatives of this metrical form are Klopstock and Goethe. Klopstock introduced it as early as 1754 in the ode *Die Genesung*. It immediately found favour with the greatest critics, both Lessing and Herder approving and recommending it. Goethe was inspired by the new form, which became generally known through the publication of Klopstock's *Sammlung der Oden* in 1771, and he early employed it both in translations and in original Odes. Since his day the free metres have remained a living poetical principle, being continued through Heine (1799—1856) in the *Nordseebilder*, and Scheffel (1826—1886) in the *Berg-psalmen* down to the poets of the present day.

The Free Rhythms have usually no fixed strophic structure. Klopstock's attempt to combine them in strophes of four lines appears awkward and artificial, the only real division being the verse itself, the rhythmic unity. The number of *Hebungen* often varies from line to line, that is to say, the Free Rhythms are often at the same time Free Verses, but the most usual are those with four *Hebungen*. With Goethe we find verses with the number of *Hebungen* ranging from one to six, but the commonest with him are the verses of three *Hebungen*, while the difference between the length of the various verses is on the whole less marked than with Klopstock. In this respect, as also in the tendency to combine the verses in strophes of more or less equal length,

he approaches nearer than most others to a kind of regularity and symmetry.

Ich hoffte es zu dir: und ich habe gesungen  
 Versöhnner Gottes, des neuen Bundes Gesang.  
 Durchlaufen bin ich, die furchtbare Laufbahn  
 Und du hast mir mein Straucheln verziehn.

Klopstock: An den Erlöser.

Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen  
 Nach meinem Bilde,  
 Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,  
 Zu leiden, zu weinen,  
 Zu genießen, und zu freuen sich  
 Und dein nicht zu achten  
 Wie ich!

Goethe: Prometheus (No. 20).

**KNITTELVERSE.** The modern Knittelverse are verses containing four *Hebungen* and a varied number of *Sentungen*. They thus correspond to the Middle High German rimed verses of four *Hebungen*. They are not the metre of Hans Sachs, as they lack the one feature of his verse which is absolutely beyond all dispute, namely, the fixed number of syllables, for whichever of the three theories as to the metrical principle of his verse be the true one, — whether he aimed at regular alternation of *Hebung* and *Sentung*, or made the regular number of four *Hebungen* in each verse his guiding principle, or allowed himself within the line absolute freedom in the number of *Hebungen* and arrangement of *Sentungen*, — the fact remains that he did give to each line an equal number of syllables.

This fixed number of syllables the modern Knittelverse lack, while the number of *Hebungen* is regular;

verse and prose accent are not at variance, but they are rhythmical lines of genuine beauty and legitimate poetical structure. Another difference is that not only are the verses rimed in pairs as with Hans Sachs, but free riming schemes are also employed. They have usually an ascending or Iambic rhythm, though sometimes the *Aufstātt* (the syllable or syllables before the first *Hēbung*) is absent and the rhythm becomes descending or Trochaic.

Goethe was the first to use the *Mittelverse* again for serious purposes, though it was only gradually that he came to do so, as he too at first utilized them for comic and satirical verses only. Later and principally during the last years at Frankfort he employed the measure in serious dramatic and narrative poems.

Modern *Mittelverse* were employed by Schiller in *Wallenstein's Lager* (1798) from which an example is here given, in the ballads *Der Taucher* (1797), *Der Handschuh* (1797), and in parts of *Maria Stuart* (1800) and the *Braut von Messina* (1803). Among later poets who made use of the metre may be mentioned Uhland (1787—1862) and Rückert (1788—1866).

Wieder ein Gebot ist: Du sollst nicht stehlen.  
 Ja, das befolgt ihr nach dem Wort,  
 Denn ihr tragt alles offen fort.  
 Vor euren Klauen und Geiersgriffen,  
 Vor euren Praktiken und bösen Kenissen  
 Ist das Geld nicht geborgen in der Truh',  
 Das Kalb nicht sicher in der Kuh,  
 Ihr nehmt das Ei und das Huhn dazu.

Schiller: *Wallenstein's Lager*.

### 3. RIME, ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, HIATUS, CAESURA.

**RIME** (*Endreim* in German) is an identity of ending in lines of poetry. In order to possess pure rime the last accented vowel of the two lines and all the following sounds must exactly correspond. The object of rime is not only to get the "*jingling sound of like endings*", but also to serve as a means of binding the strophe or poem more closely together.

Impure or half-rimes occur when there is only partial and not perfect correspondence of sound.

A *Masculine Rime* (*männlich* or *stumpf* in German) is one in which the accented vowel is not followed by an unaccented one: *wild* : *Wild*.

A *Feminine Rime* (*weiblich* or *flingend* in German), is one in which the riming vowel is followed by an unaccented one: *Gipfeln* : *Wipfeln*.

Rimes are variously arranged, from the simple riming couplets: *a a b b*, and crossed rimes: *a b a b*, to such complicated riming schemes as that of the sonnet and other poems with a fixed form.

**ALLITERATION** (*Stabreim* in German) consists in the identity of the initial consonants of those syllables that bear the principal accent, whether at the beginning or in the body of words. It preceded rime in all the Germanic languages, and was used, not for purposes of harmony like rime, but for rhetorical effect. In England and Scandinavia it maintained itself during the Middle Ages, but in Germany it disappeared before *Endreim* in the course of the IX<sup>th</sup> century. The following lines

from the *Hildebrandslied* (VIII<sup>th</sup> century) will serve as an example:

Her furlaet in lante luttilla sitten  
prüt in bäre barn unwahsan.

Besides consonantic alliteration, in which tenues could alliterate with tenues, spirants with spirants etc., there existed in Old High German vocalic alliteration, in which the vowels were required to be different.

Alliteration, which in Old German was a fundamental poetic principle binding together the ~~two halves~~ of the long line, only serves in modern verse, when used, as a mere ornament. It has been employed by some modern poets, chiefly in translation and occasionally in original compositions:

Roland der Ries' am Rathaus zu Bremen  
Steht er ein Steinbild standhaft und wacht.

Rückert.

When only partially applied, as e. g. in Goethe's *König in Thule* (No. 34), it often has a pleasing effect:

Es war ein König in Thule,  
Gar treu bis an das Grab,  
Dem sterbend seine Buhle  
Einen goldenen Becher gab.

**ASSONANCE** (*Stimmreim* in German) is of Romance origin. It consists in the identity of sound of the last accented vowels of two or more words, without taking into consideration the sounds that follow, as *gáben* : *náhmen*.

Assonance is hardly found in German except in translations and imitations, from the Spanish more especially.

**THE REFRAIN** (*Rehrreim* in German) is the repetition of one or more words or one or more lines generally at the end of each strophe, or other division

of a poem. It is found in popular and ballad poetry (cp. Ballade No. 43), and also in certain artificial forms borrowed from the Romance languages, such as the Triolet, the Roundel etc.

**THE CAESURA** (*Cäsur* or *Einschnitt* in German). Whereas in the classical languages the term *caesura* (= a cutting) was used when a foot contained the end of one word and the beginning of another, in the modern languages it is used of the pause or break in the sense which occurs at some part, usually towards the middle, of all but the shortest lines. Upon the caesura and its skilful and varied use, the rhythm and flow of the verse in great measure depend. On the other hand certain long lines have a fixed caesura, by which they are virtually divided into two short or half lines.

If the caesura falls immediately after an accented syllable it is called *masculine*, if immediately after an unaccented syllable it is called *feminine*. As an example of fixed caesura, the symbol of which is a straight line, we may take a strophe from the *Nibelungenlied* (c: 1200):

Waz sin der künec wolde ez sint in mîme hûse die niemen hie bekennet: habt in vremden landen,	des vrâgete Hagene vremde degene ob ir sie è gesehen das sult ihr, Hagene mir verjehen.
--	---

Varying Caesura is seen in the lines:

Denn wo das Strenge — mit dem Garten  
 Wo Starkes sich — und Mildes paarten  
 Da gibt es — einen guten Plang.  
 Drum prüfe — wer sich ewig bindet  
 Ob sich das Herz — zum Herzen findet.

Schiller: Lied von der Glöde,

**ENJAMBEMENT** is the term used to describe the carrying on of the sense without a break from one line to the next or a subsequent line:

zu Dionys, dem Thyrannen schlich  
Morus, den Dolch im Gewande.

Schiller: *Die Bürgschaft.*

**HIATUS** is the concurrence of two vowel sounds, one at the end of one word and the other at the beginning of the next. In the older literature little trouble was taken to avoid hiatus, and even in the classical period, it is still commonly found. With Schiller it is still frequent, with Goethe less so, though not uncommon. Later poets, notably Platen and in modern times Geibel (1815—1884) and Bodenstedt (born in 1819), take much more care to avoid it, and it is found rarely or not at all in their works. The following verses show several instances:

Ihr führet uns im Brautgewande  
Die fürchterliche Unbekannte,  
Die unerwachte Parze vor.  
Wie eure Urnen die Gebeine  
Deckt ihr mit holdem Zaubertheine  
Der Sorgen schauervollen Chor.

Schiller: *Die Künstler.*

## II. B.

### OUTLINES OF GOETHE'S METRE.

In his many-sided poetic work Goethe employed at different periods of his long life a wide range of metrical forms. It is intended to give here a general view of his relation to the principal metrical forms at various periods of his life. It would be impossible to give in a few brief pages an exhaustive account of

Goethe's poetry regarded from the metrical point of view, and no attempt will be made to do so. If the metrical structure of any of the poems included in the present selection appears to require more detailed explanation than can be found in the foregoing remarks on general metre, the difficulties will be pointed out and explained in the notes on the particular poem.

**LAMBIC VERSE.** *Rimed Iambic Pentameter* Goethe employed in three forms.

- a) *Regular*, with riming couplets (*a a b b*) and masculine endings, as in the poem entitled *Auf Miedings Tod* (No. 27).
- b) *Irregular*, with free arrangement of rimes, a mixture of masculine and feminine endings, and occasional verses of six feet (cp. *Sämentau* No. 28), after the manner of Wieland, who had not only allowed himself the freest alternation of lines of ten and eleven syllables, but also lengthened or shortened the line by a foot at will.
- c) In the *Ottava Rima* (cp. p. LVI).

*Unrimed Iambic Pentameter* or *Blank Verse* was chiefly written by Goethe during the Italian Journey (1786—1788), and the time immediately following it: *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1787), *Tasso* (1789).

*Alexandrines* were employed by Goethe mainly in his youth, during the Leipzig time for two plays: *Die Laune des Verliebten* (1767) and *Die Mitschuldigen* (1768), and subsequently in parts of *Faust II*.

*Iambic Trimeters* occur also in the Second Part of *Faust* — in the Helena Episode — rather freely treated, with a free admixture of trisyllabic feet.

Was ich gesehen, sollt ihr selbst mit Augen sehen,  
Wenn ihr Gebilde nicht die alte Nacht sogleich  
Zurück geschlungen in ihrer Tiefe Wunderschoß.

Doch daß ihr's wisset, sag ich's euch mit Worten an:  
 Als ich des Königshauses ernsten Binnenraum,  
 Der nächsten Pflicht gedenkend, feierlich betrat,  
 Erstaunt ich ob der öden Gänge Schweigsamkeit etc.

**TROCHAIC VERSE.** *Rimed* vierfüßige Trochäen occur in Goethe's short Anacreontic poems of the Leipzig time, and in the *Schatzgräber* (No. 39).

*Rimed* fünffüßige Trochäen occur in Goethe's *Braut von Corinth*:

Nach Corinthus von Athen gezogen  
 Kam ein Jüngling, dort noch unbekannt.  
 Einen Bürger hofft er sich gewogen;  
 Beide Väter waren gastverwandt,  
 Hatten frühe schon  
 Lütcherchen und Sohn  
 Braut und Bräutigam voraus genannt.

*Unrimed* fünffüßige Trochäen with feminine ending, or *Servian Trochees*, were first used by Goethe in the *Klaggesang von den edlen Frauen des Asan Aga*:

Als die Frau dies harte Wort vernommen,  
 Stand die Treue starr und voller Schmerzen,  
 Hört der Pferde Stampfen vor der Türe,  
 Und es deucht ihr, Asan käm', ihr Gatte,  
 Springt zum Turme, sich herab zu stürzen etc.

It was next employed by him, with greater freedom, in 1776 in the poem *Seefahrt* (No. 26), occasional lines of six feet being found, while at the end of the strophe lines of two feet only occur four times. In 1788 Goethe returned to the Servian Trochaic metre, this time for a longer poem *Amor als Landschaftsmaler* (No. 29), in which no metrical irregularities occur.

The same metre is also found in *Morgenflagen* and in *Der Besuch*.

*Short Iambic and Trochaic lines* with less frequent *Iambic-Anapaestic and Trochaic-Dactylic* measures are the usual forms of Goethe's *Lieder* and *Ballads*. The *Lieder* he wrote principally in his youth, at Leipzig, Strasburg and Frankfort, less frequently at Weimar up to the Italian Journey, while with the XIX<sup>th</sup> century they become rare. The *Ballads* were written principally at Weimar before the Italian Journey (1775—1786), and in and about the year 1798 (the *Balladenjahr*).

These lines contain most commonly four feet, but sometimes they present the combination of alternate lines of four and three feet which is known as *Ballad Metre*. Masculine and Feminine endings are variously combined and arranged. The most general riming schemes are the rimed couplets: a a b b, or cross rimes: a b a b. The most usual strophe is that of four lines, but those of six and eight are also frequent.

Simple Iambic and Trochaic metres are also the commonest forms in the *Westöstlicher Divan* (No. 52 and 53), and in many other branches of Goethe's poetic work.

**DACTYLIC VERSE.** *Hexameters and Pentameters* were with few exceptions written after the Italian Journey. Before that time they had been employed in the *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (1777), and one or two smaller pieces; but in the ten years following the return from Italy in 1788 they came in a steady stream, and continued into his old age. In Hexameters are written *Steinele Fuchs*, *Hermann und Dorothea*, the *Achilles* fragment and the *Episteln* etc. In Hexameters and Pentameters: *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, *Elegien I* and *II* (cp. Nos. 44—47), *Epigramme*

(cp. No. 30), Xenien, Antifer Form sich nähernd, Idyllen, Vier Jahreszeiten, Weissagungen des Walls etc. Goethe, like Schiller, troubled himself little about the improvements which Voss (1751—1826) tried to make in the Hexameter of Klopstock. He and Schiller thus drew down on themselves much hostile criticism. Two famous distiches directed against their use of the Hexameter and Pentameter are that of Voss, already quoted:

In Weimar und in Jena macht man Hexameter, wie der,  
Aber die Pentameter sind doch noch excellenter;

and the one by A. W. Schlegel:

Eure Hexameter sind der natürlicheste Naturalismus,  
Nimmer begriff euer Ohr jenes hellenische Maß.

Goethe uses indifferently as a spondee or trochee such a word as Deutschland, which Voss and Platen regard as a spondee; he treats as a dactyl such a word as Waterland, which they hold to be a Creticus (.U.), and generally disregards the principle that no radical syllable can correspond to classical short. Klopstock had employed trochees in place of spondees, and this usage Goethe continued. In this his feeling led him aright, since real spondees are, with the rarest exceptions, impossible in German, as in every accentual language. Voss had tried to reduce Klopstock's Hexameter to the regularity of Greek and Latin, but his endeavours remained without influence on Goethe, who cared more for truth and force of expression than for correctness of technique.

Dactylic Verse is only of first-rate importance for the Dactylic Hexameter and Pentameter (q. v.). An instance of simple dactylic verse (~~with~~ a few trochees and spondees) is the monologue in Iphigenie auf Tauris. Du hast Wölken, gnädige Mutterin etc. (Act 1. sc. 4).

**ANAPAESTIC VERSE** was occasionally used by Goethe in his ballads. Instances in the present selection are: *Der getreue Edwart* (No. 42) and *Gallade* (No. 43).

**FREE RHYTHMS** were written chiefly during the last Frankfort period, and at Weimar before the Italian Journey — *Oden* (Nos. 18—24), the *Barzenlied* from *Iphigenia*, parts of *Faust I*, and a few poems of the *Weitwölflicher Divan* (cf. Nos. 54 and 55).

**KNITTELVERSE** were employed by Goethe chiefly in his youth, at first for comic subjects, and later during the last Frankfort time for more serious purposes, in parts of *Faust*, in a number of dramatic satires, *Das Jahrmarktſfest zu Plundersweilern*, *Pater Brey*, and *Sathros*, in *Der ewige Jude* (1774), *Hans Sachſens poetiſche Sendung* (No. 25), and in a number of shorter poems: *Diné zu Coblenz* (1774), *Der Recensent* (1774) etc. He returned to it later (1797) in the *Legende vom Hufesen* (No. 31).

**THE OTTAVA RIMA** is of Italian origin. It is an eight-line strophe usually written in iambic Pentameters with feminine rimes in the order *a b a b a b c e*. In Italy the *Ottava Rima* has an epic character which in Germany becomes lyrical. The first German poets to really acclimatise this poetic form were W. Heinse (1749—1803) and Goethe, the *ottava rima* of earlier German poets, including that of Wieland's *Oberon* (1780), only bearing an external resemblance to the original.

Goethe, with whom this strophe was a favourite in pensive elegiac moods, employed it in two poems belonging to the Weimar period prior to the Italian Journey — the *Begründung der Gedichte* (No. 1) and

the *Geheimnisse* (1784—1785), a fragmentary philosophic and religious epic. He returned to it later in the *Zueignung des Faust* (No. 32) and in the *Epilog zu Schiller's Göde* (No. 33). His *ottave rime* are perfectly regular except that instead of adhering only to feminine rime, he uses a mixture of masculine and feminine rimes arranged according to the order *fmfmfmff*.

Each strophe stands independently as a complete whole in itself, the first six verses containing the exposition or development, as in the octet of the sonnet, and the last two the conclusion, as in the sestet of the sonnet. The *Ottava Rima*, also called *Ottave* or *Stanze* in German, has likewise been employed by several of the Romanticists, and more especially by Platen.

SONNETS were attempted by Goethe (cp. Nos. 48—51) almost exclusively in his old age. Nineteen such poems by him have come down to us, all constructed according to the regular scheme of that form, which may be briefly described as follows: fourteen lines (of five iambic feet with feminine ending) made up of two groups of four lines (quartets) on crossed rimes, (*a b b a: a b b a*) followed by two other groups of three lines (tercets) each with the rime arrangement *c d e*.

The sonnet is of Italian origin. It was first introduced into Germany about the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century by Fischart (c. 1545—1589) and Paul Melissus Schede, and became very popular in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century thanks to Martin Opitz. But the poets of that time took great liberties with its structure, using masculine as well as feminine rimes and almost all sorts of lines, though they preferred the Alexandrine. In the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century it was altogether neglected till the appearance of Bürger (1747—1794), whose *Sonnets to Molly* received

Schiller's unstinted praise. Bürger was followed by the brothers Schlegel, the elder of whom, A. W. Schlegel, a master himself in the sonnet, did a great deal to introduce it among the younger Romantic poets, despite a good deal of opposition from the older school.

Since then the sonnet has gained considerable ground as the most fitting vehicle for the concise expression of poetic thought. The structure of the sonnet used by Goethe, the regular Italian structure, has maintained its place, but by the side of it modern poets have introduced many other variations, allowing themselves great liberty, not only in the choice of lines, but more especially in the rime arrangement of the two tercets.

Although of all the poems with a fixed form the sonnet is the only one that can escape the reproach of arbitrariness, Goethe never seems to have looked upon it with much favour, and in spite of three or four exceptions, it cannot be said that those he did compose have added to his glory. They are often obscure and lacking in ease and pliancy. We miss in them that perfection of form which has made those of Petrarch so famous, and that passion which lends so striking a relief to those of Shakespeare.

**ORIENTAL METRES.** Goethe never had much sympathy with the intricacies of those poems that have a fixed form. In this respect his attitude towards certain Oriental metres was no exception to the rule. Much as he admired the genius of Eastern poetry, and however powerfully he felt himself attracted by the personality of the great Persian poet Hafiz, he refused to follow him and his disciples slavishly in the complicated form of the *Ghazel*, and other artificial measures. He preferred for his *Westöstlicher Divan* the short

strophes of four lines, the trochees of the Anacreontic School, free rhythms, or the verse-forms of his early poetry, except that in the *Divan* the rimes are richer and more curious, thereby enhancing the striking colouring and the graceful cadence of the lines. Heinrich Heine, who in this last respect has often happily followed Goethe, has drawn attention to this point in his *Romantische Schule*, where he says of the *Divan* verses that they are: „so leicht, so glücklich, so hingehaucht, so ätherisch, daß man sich wundert, wie dergleichen in deutscher Sprache möglich war”.

Goethe has left a record of his opinion with regard to those oriental metres in the poem of the *Divan*, entitled *Nachbildung*. After having satisfied his artistic ambition, as it were, in the first two strophes, he adds in conclusion:

Zugemess'ne Rhythmen reizen freilich,  
Das Talent erfreut sich wohl darin;  
Doch wie schnelle widern sie abscheulich,  
Hohle Masken ohne Blut und Sinn.  
Selbst der Geist erscheint sich nicht erfreulich,  
Wenn er nicht, auf neue Form bedacht,  
Jener toten Form ein Ende macht.

Goethe did not however altogether eschew the ghazel in the *Divan*, but he only followed its rigid canons in so far as was compatible with free poetic inspiration. The *ghazels* of Goethe (cp. *Divan* Bk. IV. 8, 23, 24; Bk. IX. 4 etc.) are constructed in a very free manner. The two opening lines are on different rimes; the riming word of the second line is repeated in every other subsequent line, while the odd lines rime in pairs, each on a different rime. An examination of No. 53 will make this point clearer.

In the regular *ghazel* on the other hand the first pair of lines and the second line of each subsequent

pair of lines have the same rime or riming word, and the remaining lines (3, 5, 7 etc.) are rimeless, as in the following example:

Sieh die Wolke, die mit Blitz und Knall spielt;  
 Sieh den Mond, mit dem der Himmel Ball spielt;  
 Sieh den Fels, der bis ans Firmament reicht,  
 Wie er liebend mit dem Widerhall spielt;  
 Sieh den Strom, der rauschend sich am Fels bricht,  
 Wenn er mit der vollen Woge Schwall spielt;  
 Sieh den Schmetterling, der längs des Stroms fliegt  
 Und mit Hyazinthen überall spielt.  
 Spiele du nur mit und sei ein Kind nur:  
 Schöne Spiele sind es, die das All spielt.

Platen.

Although Goethe did not go into any such minute study of Oriental prosody as certain of his successors, yet he was in this field, as in many others, the pioneer — he “*opened the door to the poetry of the Orient*”, to use his own expression.

The first to follow in his path were Platen (*Ghafelen*, 1821) and Rückert (*Östliche Rosen*, 1822), both sympathetically noticed by Goethe. In more modern times mention should be made before all of Bodenstedt’s *Lieder des Mirza-Schaffy* (1850).

**TERZA RIMA.** Another strophic form of Italian origin, the *Terza Rima* (*Terginen* in German), was employed by Goethe in one single poem, *Bei Betrachtung von Schiller’s Schädel*. The *terza rima* is a strophe of three lines (mostly Iambic Pentameters) of which the first line rimes with the third, while the rime of the middle line serves as the rime for the first and third line of the following strophe. The series of strophes closes with one of four lines, the fourth line of which takes up the middle rime of the last

*terza rima.* An example from Goethe's poem will make this clearer.

Im ernsten Beinhaus war's wo ich beschaut  
Wie Schädel Schädeln angeordnet paßten;  
Die alte Zeit gedacht' ich, die ergraute.

Sie stehn in Rei'h' geklemmt die sonst sich häßten,  
Und derbe Knochen die sich tödlich schlügen  
Sie liegen kreuzweis zähm allhier zu rasten.

Was kann der Mensch im Leben mehr gewinnen,  
Was daß sich Gott-Natur ihm offenbare?  
Wie sie das Feste läßt zu Geist verrinnen.  
Wie sie das Geisterzeugte fest bewahre.

The *terza rima* was also utilized by Goethe for his beautiful description of sunrise in *Faust II* l. 67 sqq.

**RIME.** According to the North German, the modern stage pronunciation, there are a good number of rimes in Goethe's poetry which are not strictly homophonous in their vowel-sounds. They represent the pronunciation of his South German speech, and were quite correct according to that dialectical pronunciation.

Such are the rimes of the simple vowels *e* (ä) and *i* (ie), short or long, with the mixed vowels *ö* and *ü*, short or long, and also the rimes *ei:eu* (äu).

Rimes of this nature are still quite common with modern poets, who use them probably in imitation of Goethe and Schiller, although this procedure is indefensible now that a standard pronunciation is well established.

The following is a list of such rimes occurring in our selection:

- '*Eritte*': '*Hütte*' ('*Bueignung*' No. 1 ll. 1-3)
- '*Entzünden*': '*erquinden*' (ib. ll. 7-8)
- '*euthüllen*': '*Ründerwillen*' (ib. ll. 58-60)

'Eiche': 'Gesträuche' ('Willkommen und Abschied' No. 2 ll. 5—7)  
 'Seite': 'Freude' (ib. ll. 17—19)  
 'Frühlingswetter': 'Götter' (ib. ll. 21—23)  
 'Blick': 'Glück' (ib. ll. 30—32)  
 'Heiden': 'Freuden' ('Heidenträumlein' No. 3 ll. 2—5)  
 'Morgenschön': 'sehn' (ib. ll. 3—4)  
 'Zweig': 'Gesträuch' ('Mailied' No. 4 ll. 6—8)  
 'treu': 'vorbei' ('An die Erwählte' No. 5 ll. 2—4)  
 'grüßt': 'genießt' (ib. ll. 6—8)  
 'liebtest': 'betrübstest' ('Neue Liebe, neues Leben' No. 6 ll. 5—6)  
 'Augenblick': 'zurück' (ib. ll. 15—16)  
 'umflügelt': 'beispiegelt' ('Auf dem See' No. 8 ll. 17—19)  
 'Leiden': 'Freuden' ('Mästlose Liebe' No. 9 ll. 7—9)  
 'stillest': 'füllst' ('Wandrers Nachtlied' No. 10 ll. 2—4)  
 'müde': 'Friede' (ib. ll. 5—7)  
 'Blick', 'zurück' ('An die Entfernte' No. 14 ll. 10—12)  
 'sehn': 'schön' ('Gefunden' No. 17 ll. 6—8)  
 'früh': 'hie' ('Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung' No. 25 ll. 1—2)  
 'spür': 'gebirt' (ib. ll. 9—10)  
 'erfreun': 'weih'n' (ib. ll. 21—22)  
 'schön': 'gesehn' (ib. ll. 37—38)  
 'treu': 'dabei' (ib. ll. 101—102)  
 'spüren': 'hosieren' (ib. ll. 107—108)  
 'gepfündt': 'geföhndt' (ib. ll. 151—152)  
 'trüb': 'Lieb' (ib. ll. 161—162)  
 'Schelmereien': 'erfreuen' (ib. ll. 175—176)  
 'sehn': 'schön' ('Auf Wiedlings Tod' (No. 27 ll. 181—182)  
 'Gründen': 'finden' ('Slinemau' No. 28 ll. 53—54)  
 'Geschide': 'zurück' (ib. ll. 7—8)  
 'Träume': 'Steime' (ib. ll. 21—22)  
 'bedeutet': 'geleitet' (ib. ll. 33—34)  
 'verlierest': 'chürest' (ib. ll. 90—91)  
 'hören': 'Sphären' (ib. ll. 73—75)  
 'enthüllen': 'stilen' (ib. ll. 128—129)  
 'euch': 'gleich' (ib. ll. 157—159)  
 'kenn': 'gegönnnt' (ib. ll. 168—170)  
 'Lehren': 'hören' ('Legende' No. 31 ll. 9—10)  
 'lehrt': 'gehört' (ib. ll. 29—30)  
 'schidt': 'büdt' (ib. ll. 55—60)  
 'regen': 'möggen' (ib. ll. 61—62)  
 'Sehnen': 'Tönen' ('Bereignung des Faust' No. 32 ll. 25—27)  
 'geneigt': 'erzeugt' ('Epilog zu Schiller's Göde' No. 33 ll. 20—22)  
 'röter': 'später' (ib. ll. 49—51)  
 'später': 'erhöhter' (ib. ll. 51—53)

'breht' : 'erhöht' (ib. ll. 60—62)  
 'ausgeblickt' : 'entzückt' (ib. ll. 74—76)  
 'gelehrt' : 'gehört' (ib. ll. 100—102)  
 'geh'n' : 'schön' ('Erlkönig' No. 36 ll. 17—18)  
 'Belehrung' : 'Beschwörung' ('Der Schatzgräber' (No. 39 ll. 34—35)  
 'Lumpenhüllen' : 'Willen' ('Der Zauberlehrling' No. 40 ll. 16—18)  
 'schwillt' : 'fällt' (ib. ll. 34—36)  
 'Lüde' : 'Blide' (ib. ll. 54—56)  
 'Hölle' : 'Schwelle' (ib. ll. 57—59)  
 'stehn' : 'schön' ('Ballade' No. 43 ll. 64—65)  
 'Blick' : 'zurück' (ib. ll. 73—74)  
 'Glück' : 'Blick' (ib. ll. 92—94)  
 'über' : 'vorgeschrrieben' ('Das Sonett' No. 48 ll. 1—4)  
 'regen' : 'mögen' (ib. ll. 6—7)  
 'schidte' : 'Hochbeglückte' ('Sie kann nicht enden' No. 50 ll. 1—4)  
 'erblickte' : 'entzückte' (ib. ll. 5—9)  
 'stilltest' : 'fälltest' (ib. ll. 11—13)  
 'beglüden' : 'erbliden' ('Charade' No. 51 ll. 11—13)  
 'Singen' : 'verjüngen' ('Hegire' No. 52 ll. 5—6)  
 'hin' : 'grün' ('Hegire' No. 53 ll. 2—4)

A short vowel sometimes rimes inaccurately with a long vowel of the same kind:

'viel' : 'will' ('Legende' No. 33 ll. 39—40)

Cases like the following:

'Kahn' : 'himmelan' ('Auf dem See' No. 8 ll. 5—7)  
 'an' : 'gethan' ('Mignon' No. 13 ll. 10—11)  
 'gethan' : 'an' ('Auf Niedlings Tod' No. 27 ll. 199—200)  
 'gethan' : 'an' ('Ilmenau' No. 28 ll. 19—20)  
 'an' : 'gethan' ('Erlkönig' No. 36 ll. 27—28)  
 'an' : 'gethan' ('Der Rattenfänger' No. 38 ll. 19—20)  
 'heran' : 'nahm' ('Ballade' No. 43 ll. 37—38)

are correct according to Goethe's South German pronunciation in which an is long.

The quantity of the i of hin in the rime

'hin' : 'grün' (No. 53 ll. 2—4)  
 is to be explained in the same way.

Rimes can also be incorrect if the consonants are of different quality:

'ſ : ſ' in 'Wiesen' : 'umfließen' ('Bueignung' No. 1 ll. 9—11)  
 'preisen' : 'heißen' ('Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung' No. 25 ll. 49—50)

'f : β' in 'Weiß': 'Fleiß' ('Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung'  
No. 25 ll. 89—90)

'Reise': 'Fleife' ('Ilmenau' No. 28 ll. 167—169)

'd : t' in 'Freude': 'Seite' ('Willkommen und Abschied' No. 2  
ll. 17—19)

'Narrtheiden': 'bereiten' ('Hans Sachsen's poetische Sen-  
dung' No. 25 ll. 109—110)

The rimes of final *d* with final *t* (*Feld*: *Welt*  
*Maitied* No. 4 ll. 6—8 etc.) are unobjectionable, as  
in German the voiced consonants *d*, *b*, *g* become  
voiceless *t*, *p*, *k* at the end of a word. Likewise the  
rime *g*:*k* is quite correct for the same reason.



### 1. Bereigung (1784—1785).

Der Morgen kam; es scheuchten seine Tritte  
Den leisen Schlaf, der mich gelind umsing,  
Dass ich, erwacht, aus meiner stillen Hütte  
Den Berg hinauf mit frischer Seele ging;  
Ich freute mich bei einem jeden Schritte  
Der neuen Blume die voll Tropfen hing;  
Der junge Tag erhob sich mit Entzücken,  
Und alles ward erquidt mich zu erquiden.

5

Und wie ich stieg, zog von dem Fluss der Wiesen  
Ein Nebel sich in Streifen sacht hervor.

10

Er wich und wechselte mich zu umstiehen,  
Und wuchs gesügelt mir ums Haupt empor:  
Des schönen Blids sollt' ich nicht mehr genießen,  
Die Gegend deckte mir ein trüber Flor;  
Bald sah ich mich von Wollen wie umgossen,  
Und mit mir selbst in Dämmerung eingeschlossen.

15

Auf einmal schien die Sonne durchzudringen,  
Zu Nebel ließ sich eine Klarheit fehn.  
Hier sank er leise sich hinabzuschwingen;  
Hier teilt' er steigend sich um Wald und Höhn.  
Wie hofft' ich, ihr den ersten Gruß zu bringen!  
Sie hofft' ich nach der Trübe doppelt schön.  
Der lust'ge Kampf war lange nicht vollendet,  
Ein Glanz umgab mich und ich stand geblendet.

20

25 Bald machte mich, die Augen aufzuschlagen,  
 Ein innerer Trieb des Herzens wieder kühn,  
 Ich konnt' es nur mit schnellen Blicken wagen,  
 Denn alles schien zu brennen und zu glühn.  
 Da schwante mit den Wollen hergetragen  
 30 Ein göttlich Weib vor meinen Augen hin,  
 Kein schöner Bild sah ich in meinem Leben,  
 Sie sah mich an und blieb verweilend schwelen.

Kennst Du mich nicht? sprach sie mit einem Wunde,  
 Dem aller Lieb' und Treue Ton entfloß:  
 35 Erkennst du mich, die ich in manche Wunde  
 Des Lebens dir den reinsten Balsam goß?  
 Du kennst mich wohl, an die, zu ew'gem Wunde,  
 Dein strebend Herz sich fest und fester schloß.  
 Sah ich dich nicht mit heißen Herzenstränen  
 40 Als Knabe schon nach mir dich eifrig sehnen?

Ja! rief ich aus, indem ich selig niedert  
 Zur Erde sank, lang' hab' ich dich gefühlt;  
 Du gabst mir Ruh, wenn durch die jungen Glieder  
 Die Leidenschaft sich rastlos durchgewühlt;  
 45 Du hast mir wie mit himmlischem Gefieder  
 Am heißen Tag die Stirne sanft gekühlt;  
 Du schenktest mir der Erde beste Gaben,  
 Und jedes Glück will ich durch dich nur haben!

Dich nenn' ich nicht. Zwar hör' ich dich von vielen  
 50 Gar oft genannt, und jeder heißt dich sein,  
 Ein jedes Auge glaubt auf dich zu zielen,  
 Fast jedem Auge wird dein Strahl zur Pein.  
 Ach, da ich irrte, hatt' ich viel Gespielen,  
 Da ich dich kenne, bin ich fast allein;  
 55 Ich muß mein Glück nur mit mir selbst genießen,  
 Dein holdes Licht verdecken und verschließen.

Sie lächelte, sie sprach: du siehst, wie Flug,  
Wie nötig war's, euch wenig zu enthüllen!  
Kaum bist du sicher vor dem größten Trug,  
Kaum bist du Herr vom ersten Kinderwillen,  
So glaubst du dich schon Übermensch genug,  
Versäumst die Pflicht des Mannes zu erfüllen!  
Wie viel bist du von andern unterschieden?  
Erkenne dich, leb' mit der Welt in Frieden!

60

Berzeih mir, rief ich aus, ich meint' es gut;  
Soll ich umsonst die Augen offen haben?  
Ein froher Wille lebt in meinem Blut,  
Ich kenne ganz den Wert von deinen Gaben!  
Für andre wächst in mir das edle Gut,  
Ich kann und will das Pfund nicht mehr vergraben! 70  
Warum sucht' ich den Weg so sehnsvoll,  
Wenn ich ihn nicht den Brüdern zeigen soll?

Und wie ich sprach, sah mich das hohe Wesen  
Mit einem Blick mitleid'ger Nachsicht an;  
Ich konnte mich in ihrem Auge lesen,  
Was ich verfehlt und was ich recht getan.  
Sie lächelte, da war ich schon genesen,  
Zu neuen Freuden stieg mein Geist heran;  
Ich konnte nun mit innigem Vertrauen  
Mich zu ihr nah'n und ihre Nähe schauen. 80

Da reckte sie die Hand aus in die Streifen  
Der leichten Wollen und des Dufts umher,  
Wie sie ihn fasste, ließ er sich ergreifen,  
Er ließ sich ziehn, es war kein Nebel mehr.  
Mein Auge konnt' im Tale wieder schwiesen,  
Gen Himmel blickt' ich, er war hell und hehr.  
Nur sah ich sie den reinsten Schleier halten,  
Er floß um sie und schwoll in tausend Falten. 85

Ich kenne dich, ich kenne deine Schwächen,  
 90 Ich weiß was Gutes in dir lebt und glimmt!  
 — So sagte sie, ich hör sie ewig sprechen, —  
 Empfange hier was ich dir lang' bestimmt,  
 Dem Glücklichen kann es an nichts gebrechen,  
 Der dies Geschenk mit stiller Seele nimmt:  
 95 Aus Morgenduft gewebt und Sonnenklarheit,  
 Der Dichtung Schleier aus der Hand der Wahrheit.

Und wenn es dir und deinen Freunden schwülle  
 Um Mittag wird, so wirf ihn in die Lust!  
 Sogleich umsäuselt Abendwindesfühle,  
 100 Umhaucht euch Blumen-Würzgeruch und Duft.  
 Es schweigt das Wehen banger Erdgefühle,  
 Zum Wolkenbette wandelt sich die Grust,  
 Besänftiget wird jede Lebenswelle,  
 Der Tag wird lieblich und die Nacht wird helle.

105 So kommt denn, Freunde, wenn auf euren Wegen  
 Des Lebens Bürde schwer und schwerer drückt,  
 Wenn eure Bahn ein frischerneuter Segen  
 Mit Blumen ziert, mit goldenen Früchten schmückt,  
 Wir gehn vereint dem nächsten Tag entgegen!

110 So leben wir, so wandeln wir beglückt.  
 Und dann auch soll, wenn Enkel um uns trauern,  
 Zu ihrer Lust noch unsre Liebe dauern.

23

— I. Lieder. —

—

2. Willkommen und Abschied (1771?).

Es schlug mein Herz, geschwind zu Pferde!  
Es war getan fast eh' gedacht;  
Der Wind wiegte schon die Erde  
Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht:  
Schon stand im Rebelleid die Eiche,  
Ein aufgetürmter Miese, da,  
Wo Finsternis aus dem Gestrauch  
Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.

5

Der Mond von einem Wollenthügel  
Sah läglich aus dem Duft hervor,  
Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel,  
Umsausten schauerlich mein Ohr;  
Die Nacht schuf tausend Ungeheuer;  
Doch frisch und fröhlich war mein Mut:  
In meinen Adern welches Feuer!  
In meinem Herzen welche Glut!

10

15

Dich sah ich, und die milde Freude  
Floß von dem süßen Blick auf mich;  
Ganz war mein Herz an deiner Seite  
Und jeder Atemzug für dich.  
Ein rosenfarbnes Frühlingswetter  
Umgab das liebliche Gesicht,  
Und Bärtlichkeit für mich — ihr Götter!  
Ich hoff' es, ich verdient' es nicht!

17

20

25      Doch ach! schon mit der Morgensonne  
 Verengt der Abschied mir das Herz:  
 In deinen Küssen welche Wonne!  
 In deinem Auge welcher Schmerz!  
 Ich ging, du standst und sahst zur Erden,  
 Und sahst mir nach mit nassem Blick:  
 Und doch, welch Glück geliebt zu werden!  
 Und lieben, Götter, welch ein Glück!

### 3. Heidenröslein (1771?).

Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein stehn,  
 Röslein auf der Heiden,  
 War so jung und morgenschön,  
 Ließ er schnell es nah zu sehn,  
 5      Sah's mit vielen Freuden.  
 Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot,  
 Röslein auf der Heiden.

Knabe sprach: ich breche dich,  
 Röslein auf der Heiden!  
 10     Röslein sprach: ich steche dich,  
 Dass du ewig denkst an mich,  
 Und ich will's nicht leiden.  
 Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot,  
 Röslein auf der Heiden.

15     Und der wilde Knabe brach  
 's Röslein auf der Heiden;  
 Röslein wehrte sich und stach,  
 Half ihr doch kein Weh und Ach,  
 Röslein 20    Röslein rot,  
 Röslein auf der Heiden.

## 4. Mailied (1771?).

Wie herrlich leuchtet  
Mir die Natur!  
Wie glänzt die Sonne  
Wie lacht die Flur!

Es dringen Blüten  
Aus jedem Zweig  
Und tausend Stimmen  
Aus dem Gesträuch.

Und Freud' und Wonne  
Aus jeder Brust.  
O Erd', o Sonne!  
O Glück, o Lust!

O Lieb', o Liebel!  
So golden schön,  
Wie Morgenwölken  
Auf jenen Höh'n!

Du segnest herrlich  
Das frische Feld,  
Im Blütendampfe  
Die volle Welt.

O Mädchen, Mädchen,  
Wie lieb' ich dich!  
Wie blickt dein Auge!  
Wie liebst du mich!

So liebt die Lerche  
Gesang und Lust,  
Und Morgenblumen  
Den Himmelsduft,

6

10

15

20

25

30            Wie ich dich liebe  
               Mit warmem Blut,  
               Die du mir Jugend  
               Und Freud' und Mut

35            Zu neuen Liedern  
               Und Tänzen gibst.  
               Sei ewig glücklich,  
               Wie du mich liebst!

### 5. An die Erwählte (1771?).

Hand in Hand! und Lipp' auf Lippel  
               Liebes Mädchen, bleibe treu!  
               Lebe wohl! und manche Klippe  
               Fährt dein Liebster noch vorbei;  
               Über wenn er einst den Hafen,  
               Nach dem Sturme wieder grüßt,  
               Mögen ihn die Götter strafen,  
               Wenn er ohne dich genießt.

10            Frisch gewagt ist schon gewonnen,  
               Halb ist schon mein Werk vollbracht!  
               Sterne leuchten mir wie Sonnen,  
               Nur dem Feigen ist es Nacht.  
               Wär' ich müßig dir zur Seite,  
               Drückte noch der Kummer mich;  
               Doch in aller dieser Weite  
               Wirl' ich rasch und nur für dich.

15            Schon ist mir das Tal gefunden,  
               Wo wir einst zusammen gehn,  
               Und den Strom in Abendstunden  
               Sanft hinunter gleiten sehn.

Diese Pappeln auf den Wiesen,  
 Diese Buchen in dem Hain!  
 Ach, und hinter allen diesen  
 Wird doch auch ein Hütchen sein.

— 6. Neue Liebe neues Leben (1775).

Herz, mein Herz, was soll das geben?  
 Was bedränget dich so sehr?  
 Welch ein fremdes neues Leben!  
 Ich erkenne dich nicht mehr.  
 Weg ist alles, was du liebst,  
 Weg warum du dich betrübst,  
 Weg dein Fleiß und deine Ruh —  
 Ach wie kamst du nur dazu!

Tesselt dich die Jugendblüte,  
 Diese liebliche Gestalt,  
 Dieser Blick voll Treu' und Güte,  
 Mit unendlicher Gewalt?  
 Will ich rasch mich ihr entziehen,  
 Mich ermannen, ihr entfliehen,  
 Führet mich im Augenblick  
 Ach mein Weg zu ihr zurück.

10

15

Und an diesem Zauberfädchen,  
 Das sich nicht zerreißen lässt,  
 Hält das liebe lose Mädchen  
 Mich so wider Willen fest;  
 Muß in ihrem Zauberkreise  
 Leben nun auf ihre Weise.  
 Die Veränd'rung ach wie groß!  
 Liebel! Liebel! laß mich los!

20

## 7. An Belinden (1775).

Warum ziehst du mich unwiderstehlich  
 Ach in jene Pracht?  
 War ich guter Junge nicht so selig  
 In der öden Nacht?

5      Heimlich in mein Zimmerchen verschlossen,  
       Lag im Mondenschein  
       Ganz von seinem Schauerlicht umflossen,  
       Und ich dämmert' ein;

10     Träumte da von vollen goldnen Stunden  
       Ungemischter Lust,  
       Hatte schon dein liebes Bild empfunden  
       Tief in meiner Brust.

15     Bin ich's noch, den du bei so viel Lichern  
       An dem Spieltisch hältst?  
       Oft so unerträglichen Gesichtern  
       Gegenüber stellst?

20     Reizender ist mir des Frühlings Blüte  
       Nun nicht auf der Flur;  
       Wo du, Engel, bist, ist Lieb' und Güte,  
       Wo du bist, Natur.

## 8. Auf dem See (1775).

Und frische Nahrung, neues Blut  
 Saug' ich aus freier Welt;  
 Wie ist Natur so hold und gut,  
 Die mich am Busen hält!

Die Welle wieget unsren Kahn  
Im Studertalt hinauf  
Und Berge, wolfig himmelan,  
Begegnen unserm Lauf.

5

Aug', mein Aug', was sinkst du nieder?  
Goldne Träume, kommt ihr wieder?  
Weg, du Traum! so Gold du bist;  
Hier auch Lieb' und Leben ist.

10

Auf der Welle blinken  
Tausend schwebende Sterne;  
Weiche Nebel trinken  
Rings die türmende Ferne;  
Morgenwind umflügelt  
Die beschattete Bucht,  
Und im See bespiegelt  
Sich die reisende Frucht.

15

20

### 9. Raßlose Liebe (1776).

Dem Schnee, dem Negen,  
Dem Wind entgegen,  
Im Dampf der Küste,  
Durch Nebeldüste,  
Immer zu! Immer zu!  
Ohne Rast und Ruh!

5

Lieber durch Leiden  
Möcht' ich mich schlagen,  
Als so viel Freuden  
Des Lebens extragen.

10

Alle das Neigen  
Von Herzen zu Herzen,  
Ach wie so eigen  
Schaffet das Schmerzen!

15            Wie soll ich fliehen?  
Wälderwärts ziehen?  
Alles vergebens!  
Krone des Lebens,  
Glück ohne Ruh,  
Liebe, bist du!

20

### 10. Wandrer's Nachtlied I. (1776).

Der du von dem Himmel bist  
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillst,  
Den, der doppelt elend ist,  
Doppelt mit Erquickung füllest,  
Ach ich bin des Treibens müdel  
Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?  
Süßer Friede,  
Komm, ach komm in meine Brust!

### 11. An den Mond (1778).

Füllest wieder Busch und Tal  
Still mit Nebelglanz,  
Lösest endlich auch einmal  
Meine Seele ganz;

5            Breitest über mein Gefild  
Lindernd deinen Blick,  
Wie des Freundes Auge mild  
Über mein Geschick.

Jeden Nachhall fühlt mein Herz  
Froh- und trüber Zett,  
10

Wandle zwischen Freud' und Schmerz  
In der Einsamkeit.

Fließe, fließe, lieber Fluß!

Nimmer werd' ich froh,  
So verrauschte Scherz und Knuß,  
15

Und die Treue so.

Ich besaß es doch einmal,  
Was so köstlich ist!  
Doch man doch zu seiner Dual  
Nimmer es vergißt!

20

Rausche, Fluß, das Tal entlang  
Ohne Rast und Ruh,

Rausche, flüstre meinem Sang  
Melodien zu,

Wenn du in der Winternacht  
Witend überschwillst,

Oder um die Frühlingspracht  
Junger Knospen quillst.

25

Selig, wer sich vor der Welt  
Ohne Hass verschließt,

Einen Freund am Busen hält  
Und mit dem genießt,

30

Was, von Menschen nicht gewußt,  
Oder nicht bedacht,

Durch das Labyrinth der Brust  
Wandelt in der Nacht.

35

## 12. Ein Glethes (1780).

Über allen Gipfeln  
Ist Ruh,  
In allen Wipfeln  
Spürtest du  
5 Raum einen Hauch;  
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.  
Warte nur, halde  
Ruhest du auch.

## 13. Mignon (1784?).

Kennst du das Land, wo die Citronen blühn,  
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,  
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht,  
5 Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! Dahin  
Möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn.

Kennst du das Haus? Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach,  
Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,  
10 Und Marmorbilder stehn und sehn mich an:  
Was hat mau dir, du armes Kind, getan?  
Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! Dahin  
Möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Beschützer, ziehn!

Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wollensieg?  
15 Das Maultier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg;  
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut;  
Es stürzt der Fels und über ihn die Flut,  
Kennst du es wohl?

Dahin! Dahin  
20 Geht unser Weg! o Vater, laß uns ziehn!

## 14. An die Entfernte (1789?).

So hab' ich wirklich dich verloren?  
 Bist du, o Schöne, mir entflohn?  
 Noch klingt in den gewohnten Ohren  
 Ein jedes Wort, ein jeder Ton.

So wie des Wandrers Blick am Morgen  
 Vergebens in die Lüste bringt,  
 Wenn, in dem blauen Raum verborgen,  
 Hoch über ihm die Lerche singt:

So bringet ängstlich hin und wieder  
 Durch Feld und Busch und Wald mein Blick; 10  
 Dich rufen alle meine Lieder;  
 O komm, Geliebte, mir zurück!

## 15. Schäfers Klaglied (1801).

Da droben auf jenem Berge  
 Da steh' ich tausendmal  
 An meinem Stabe gebogen  
 Und schaue hinab in das Tal.

Dann folg' ich der weidenden Herde, 5  
 Mein Hündchen bewahret mir sie.  
 Ich bin herunter gekommen  
 Und weiß doch selber nicht wie.

Da steht von schönen Blumen  
 Die ganze Wiese so voll.  
 Ich breche sie, ohne zu wissen,  
 Wem ich sie geben soll. 10

15                    Und Regen, Sturm und Gewitter  
 Verpass' ich unter dem Baum.  
 Die Türe dort bleibt verschlossen;  
 Doch alles ist leider ein Traum.

20                    Es steht ein Regenbogen  
 Wohl über jenem Haus!  
 Sie aber ist weggezogen,  
 Und weit in das Land hinaus.

Hinaus in das Land und weiter,  
 Vielleicht gar über die See.  
 Vorüber, ihr Schafe, vorüber!  
 Dem Schäfer ist gar so weh.

### 16. Trost in Tränen (1803?).

Wie kommt's, daß du so traurig bist,  
 Da alles fröh erscheint?  
 Man sieht dir's an den Augen an,  
 Gewiß, du hast geweint.

5                    „Und hab' ich einsam auch geweint,  
 So ist's mein eigner Schmerz,  
 Und Tränen fließen gar so süß,  
 Erleichtern mir das Herz.“

10                    Die frohen Freunde laden dich,  
 O komm an unsre Brust!  
 Und was du auch verloren hast,  
 Vertraue den Verlust.

15                    „Ihr lärmst und rauscht und ahnet nicht,  
 Was mich, den Armen, quält.  
 Ach nein, verloren hab' ich's nicht,  
 So sehr es mir auch fehlt.“

So raffe denn dich eilig auf,  
 Du bist ein junges Blut.  
 In deinen Jahren hat man Kraft  
 Und zum Erwerben Mut.

20

„Ach nein, erwerben kann ich's nicht,  
 Es steht mir gar zu fern.  
 Es weilt so hoch, es blinkt so schön,  
 Wie droben jener Stern.“

Die Sterne, die begehrt man nicht,  
 Man freut sich ihrer Pracht,  
 Und mit Entzücken blickt man auf  
 In jeder heitern Nacht.

25

„Und mit Entzücken blick' ich auf  
 So manchen lieben Tag;  
 Verweinen laßt die Nächte mich,  
 So lang' ich weinen mag.“

30

### 17. Gefunden (1813).

Ich ging im Walde  
 So für mich hin,  
 Und nichts zu suchen  
 Das war mein Stun.

Im Schatten sah ich  
 Ein Blümchen stehn,  
 Wie Sterne leuchtend,  
 Wie Auglein schön.

5

Ich wollt' es brechen,  
 Da sagt' es fein:  
 Soll ich zum Welken  
 Gebrochen sein?

10

(M 961)

F

15            Ich grub's mit allen  
               Den Würzlein aus,  
               Zum Garten trug ich's  
               Am hübschen Haus.  
  
 20            Und pflanz't es wieder  
               Am stillen Ort;  
               Nun zweigt es immer  
               Und blüht so fort.



II. ODES.

18. Mahomet's Gesang (1772?).

Seht den Felsenquell,  
 Freudehell  
 Wie ein Sternenblick;  
 Über Wolken  
 5            Nährten seine Jugend  
 Gute Geister  
 Zwischen Klippen im Gebüscht.  
  
 Jünglingfrisch  
 Tanzt er aus der Wolke  
 Auf die Marmorfelsen nieder,  
 Fauchzet wieder  
 10            Nach dem Himmel.  
  
 Durch die Gipfelpfade  
 Jagt er bunten Kieseln nach,  
 Und mit fröhlem Führertritt  
 Reißt er seine Bruderquellen  
 15            Mit sich fort

Drunten werden in dem Tal  
Unter seinem Füstritt Blumen,  
Und die Wiese  
Lebt von seinem Hauch. 20

Doch ihn hält kein Schattental,  
Keine Blumen,  
Die ihm seine Knie' umschlingen,  
Ihm mit Liebes-Augen schmeicheln:  
Nach der Ebne dringt sein Lauf,  
Schlangenwandelnd. 25

Bäche schmiegen  
Sich gesellig an. Nun tritt er  
In die Ebne silberprangend,  
Und die Ebne prangt mit ihm,  
Und die Flüsse von der Ebne  
Und die Bäche von den Bergen  
Fauchzen ihm und rufen: Bruder!  
Bruder, nimm die Brüder mit,  
Mit zu deinem alten Vater,  
Zu dem ew'gen Ozean,  
Der mit ausgespannten Armen  
Unser wartet,  
Die sich ach! vergebens öffnen,  
Seine Sehnenden zu fassen;  
Denn uns fräßt in öder Wüste  
Gier'ger Sand; die Sonne droben  
Saugt an unserm Blut; ein Hügel  
Hemmet uns zum Teichel Bruder,  
Nimm die Brüder von der Ebne,  
Nimm die Brüder von den Bergen  
Mit, zu deinem Vater mit! 45

Kommt ihr alle! —  
Und nun schwollt er 50

Herrlicher; ein ganz Geschlechte  
 Trägt den Fürsten hoch empor!  
 Und im rollenden Triumph  
 Gibt er Ländern Namen, Städte  
 Werden unter seinem Fuß.  
 55

Unaufhaltsam rauscht er weiter,  
 Läßt der Türme Flammengipfel,  
 Marmorhäuser, eine Schöpfung  
 Seiner Fülle, hinter sich.  
 60

Bedernhäuser trägt der Atlas  
 Auf den Riesen Schultern; sanftend  
 Wehen über seinem Haupte  
 Tausend Flaggen durch die Lüfte,  
 Zeugen seiner Herrlichkeit.  
 65

Und so trägt er seine Brüder,  
 Seine Schäze, seine Kinder  
 Dem erwartenden Erzeuger  
 Freudebrausend an das Herz.

### 19. An Schwager Kronos (1774).

Spude dich, Kronos!  
 Fort den rasselnden Trott!  
 Bergab gleitet der Weg;  
 Elles Schwindeln zögert  
 5 Mir vor die Stirn dein Zaudern.  
 Frisch, holpert es gleich,  
 Über Stock und Steine den Trott  
 Rasch ins Leben hinein!  
 10 Nun schon wieder  
 Den eratmenden Schritt  
 Mühsam Berg hinauf!

Auf denn, nicht träge denn,  
Strebend und hoffend hinan!

Weit, hoch, herrlich der Blick  
Rings ins Leben hinein,  
Vom Gebirg' zum Gebirg'  
Schwebet der ewige Geist,  
Ewigen Lebens ahndevoll.

Seitwärts des Überdachs Schatten  
Zieht dich an,  
Und ein Frischung verheißender Blick  
Auf der Schwelle des Mädchens da.  
Labe dich! — Mir auch, Mädchen,  
Diesen schäumenden Tran!,  
Diesen frischen Gesundheitsblick!

Ab denn, rascher hinab!  
Sieh, die Sonne sinkt!  
Eh' sie sinkt, eh' mich Greifen  
Ergreift im Moore Nebelduft,  
Entzahnte Siefer schnattern  
Und das schlitternde Gebein.

Trunknen vom letzten Strahl  
Reiß mich, ein Feuermeer  
Mir im schäumenden Aug',  
Mich geblendetem Tumelnden  
In der Hölle nüchtlches Tor.

Töne, Schwager, ins Horn,  
Rasle den schallenden Trab,  
Daz der Orcus vernehme: wir kommen,  
Daz gleich an der Türe  
Der Wirt uns freundlich empfange.

15

20

25

30

35

40

## 20. Prometheus (1774).

Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus,  
 Mit Wolkendunst,  
 Und übe, dem Knaben gleich,  
 Der Disteln köpft,  
 5 An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn;  
 Mußt mir meine Erde  
 Doch lassen stehn,  
 Und meine Hütte, die du nicht gebau,  
 Und meinen Herd,  
 10 Um dessen Glut  
 Du mich beneidest.

Ich kenne nichts Armeres  
 Unter der Sonn', als euch, Götter!  
 Ihr nähret kümmerlich  
 15 Von Opfersteuern  
 Und Gebetshauch  
 Eure Majestät,  
 Und darbtet, wären  
 Nicht Kinder und Bettler  
 20 Hoffnungsvolle Toren.

Da ich ein Kind war,  
 Nicht wußte wo aus noch ein,  
 Kehrt' ich mein verirrtes Auge  
 Zur Sonne, als wenn drüber wär'  
 Ein Ohr, zu hören meine Plage,  
 25 Ein Herz wie mein's,  
 Sich des Bedrängten zu erbarmen.

Wer half mir  
 Wider der Titanen Übermut?  
 Wer rettete vom Tode mich,  
 30 Von Sklaverei?

Hast du nicht alles selbst vollendet,  
Heilig glühend Herz?  
Und glühest jung und gut,  
Betrogen, Rettungsdank  
Dem Schlafenden da droben? 35

Ich dich ehren? Wofür?  
Hast du die Schmerzen gelindert  
Ze des Beladenen?  
Hast du die Tränen gestillt  
Ze des Geängsteten?  
Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet  
Die allmächtige Zeit  
Und das ewige Schicksal,  
Meine Herrn und deine? 45

Wähntest du etwa,  
Ich sollte das Leben hassen,  
In Wüsten fliehen,  
Weil nicht alle  
Blütenträume reisten? 50

Hier sit' ich, forme Menschen  
Nach meinem Bilde,  
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,  
Zu leiden, zu weinen,  
Zu genießen und zu freuen sich  
Und dein nicht zu achten,  
Wie ich! 55

## 21. Harzpreise im Winter (1777).

Dem Geier gleich,  
Der auf schweren Morgenwolken  
Mit sanftem Fittig ruhend

5           Nach Beute schaut,  
Schwebe mein Lied.

10          Denn ein Gott hat  
Jedem seine Bahn  
Vorgezeichnet,  
Die der Glückliche  
Rasch zum freudigen  
Hiele rennt:  
Wem aber Unglück  
Das Herz zusammenzog  
Er sträubt vergebens  
Sich gegen die Schranken  
Des ehernen Fadens,  
Den die doch bittre Schere  
Nur einmal lößt.

20          In Dichts-Schauer  
Drängt sich das rauhe Wild,  
Und mit den Sperlingen  
Haben längst die Reichen  
In ihre Sümpfe sich gesenkt.

25          Leicht ist's, folgen dem Wagen,  
Den Fortuna führt,  
Wie der gemächliche Troß,  
Auf gebesserten Wegen  
Hinter des Fürsten Einzug.

30          Aber abseits wer ist's?  
Ins Gebüsch verliert sich sein Pfad,  
Hinter ihm schlagen  
Die Sträuche zusammen,  
Das Gras steht wieder auf,  
Die Ede verschlingt ihn.

Ach, wer heilet die Schmerzen Des, dem Balsam zu Gift ward?	35
Der sich Menschenhaß Aus der Fülle der Liebe trank? Erst verachtet, nun ein Verächter, Behrt er heimlich auf Seinen eignen Wert	40
In ung'nügender Selbstsucht.	
Ist auf deinem Psalter, Vater der Liebe, ein Ton Seinem Ohr vernehmlich, So erquide sein Herz! Öffne den umwölkten Blick Über die tausend Quellen Neben dem Durstenden In der Wüste.	45
Der du der Freuden viel schaffst, Jedem ein überfließend Maß, Segne die Brüder der Jagd Auf der Fährte des Wilds Mit jugendlichem Übermut	50
Fröhlicher Mordsucht, Späte Rächer des Unbills, Dem schon Jahre vergeblich Wehrt mit Knütteln der Bauer.	55
Aber den Einsamen hüll In deine Goldwolken! Umgib mit Wintergrün, Bis die Rose wieder heranreift, Die feuchten Haare,	60
O Liebe, deines Dichters!	65
Mit der dämmernden Fad'l Leuchtest du ihm	

Durch die Furtten bei Nacht,  
Über grundlose Wege  
70 Auf öden Gefilden;  
Mit dem tausendfarbigen Morgen  
Lachst du ins Herz ihm;  
Mit dem heizenden Sturm  
Trägst du ihn hoch empor;  
75 Winterströme stürzen vom Felsen  
In seine Psalmen,  
Und Altar des lieblichsten Danks  
Wird ihm des gefürchteten Gipfels  
Schneebehangner Scheitel,  
80 Den mit Geisterreihen  
Kränzten ahnende Völker.

Du stehst mit unerforschtem Busen  
Geheimnisvoll offenbar  
Über der erstaunten Welt  
85 Und schaust aus Wolken  
Auf ihre Reiche und Herrlichkeit,  
Die du aus den Adern deiner Brüder  
Neben dir wässerst.

## 22. Meine Göttin (1780).

Welcher Unsterblichen  
Soll der höchste Preis sein?  
Mit niemand streit' ich,  
Aber ich geb' ihn  
5 Der ewig beweglichen,  
Immer neuen,  
Seltsamen Tochter Jovis,  
Seinem Schößlinde,  
Der Phantasie.

Denn ihr hat er Alle Launen, Die er sonst nur allein Sich vorbehält, Zugestanden, Und hat seine Freude An der Törin.	10
Sie mag rosenbekränzt Mit dem Liliengstengel Blumentäler betreten, Sommervögeln gebieten, Und leichtenährenden Tau Mit Bienenlippen Von Blüten saugen:	15
Oder sie mag Mit fliegendem Haar Und düsterm Blicke Im Winde sausen Um Felsenwände, Und tausendsfarbig Wie Morgen und Abend, Immer wechselnd Wie Mondesblicke, Den Sterblichen scheinen.	25
Läßt uns alle Den Vater preisen! Den alten hohen Der solch eine schöne Unverweltliche Gattin Dem sterblichen Menschen Gefallen mögen!	30
Denn uns allein Hat er sie verbunden	35
	40

Mit Himmelsband,  
Und ihr geboten,  
45 In Freud' und Elend,  
Als treue Gattin  
Nicht zu entweichen.

Alle die andern  
50 Armen Geschlechter  
Der kinderreichen  
Lebendigen Erde  
Wandeln und weiden  
In dunklem Genuss  
Und trüben Schmerzen  
55 Des augenblicklichen  
Beschränkten Lebens,  
Gebeugt vom Zache  
Der Notdurft.

Uns aber hat er  
60 Seine gewandteste  
Berzärtelte Tochter,  
Freut euch! gegönnt.  
Begegnet ihr lieblich,  
Wie einer Geliebten!  
Laßt ihr die Würde  
65 Der Frauen im Hause!

Und daß die alte  
Schwiegermutter Weisheit  
Das zarte Seelchen  
70 Ja nicht beleid'ge!

Doch kenn' ich ihre Schwester,  
Die ältere, gesetztere,  
Meine stille Freundin:  
O daß die erst

Mit dem Lichte des Lebens  
Sich von mir wende,  
Die edle Treiberin,  
Trösterin Hoffnung.

75

23. Grenzen der Menschheit (1781?).

Wenn der uralte  
Heilige Vater  
Mit gelassener Hand  
Aus rollenden Wolken  
Segnende Wölze  
Über die Erde sät,  
Rüß' ich den letzten  
Saum seines Kleides,  
Kindliche Schauer  
Treu in der Brust.

5

Denn mit Göttern  
Soll sich nicht messen  
Irgend ein Mensch.  
Hebt er sich aufwärts,  
Und berührt  
Mit dem Scheitel die Sterne,  
Nirgends haften dann  
Die unsichern Sohlen,  
Und mit ihm spielen  
Wolken und Winde.

15

Steht er mit festen  
Markigen Knochen  
Auf der wohlgegründeten  
Dauernden Erde;  
Reicht er nicht auf  
Nur mit der Eiche

20

25

Oder der Nebel  
Sich zu vergleichen.

Was unterscheidet  
30 Götter von Menschen?  
Dass viele Wellen  
Vor jenen wandeln  
Ein ewiger Strom:  
Uns hebt die Welle,  
Verschlingt die Welle,  
Und wir versinken.

40 Ein kleiner Ring  
Begrenzt unser Leben,  
Und viele Geschlechter  
Reihen sich dauernd  
An ihres Daseins  
Unendliche Kette.

#### 24. Das Göttliche (1783?).

Edel sei der Mensch,  
Hilfsreich und gut!  
Denn das allein  
Unterscheidet ihn  
5 Von allen Wesen,  
Die wir kennen.

Heil den unbekannten  
Höheren Wesen,  
Die wir ahnen!  
Ihnen gleiche der Mensch;  
Sein Beispiel lehr' uns  
10 Sene glauben.

Denn unfühlend  
Ist die Natur:

(

Es leuchtet die Sonne  
Über Böß und Gute,  
Und dem Verbrecher  
Glänzen, wie dem Besten,  
Der Mond und die Sterne.

15

Wind und Ströme  
Donner und Hagel  
Rauschen ihren Weg,  
Und ergreifen  
Vorübereilend,  
Einen um den andern.

20

Auch so das Glück  
Tappt unter die Menge,  
Faßt bald des Knaben  
Locige Unschuld,  
Bald auch den kahlen  
Schuldigen Scheitel.

25

Nach ewigen, ehrnen,  
Großen Gesetzen  
Müssen wir alle  
Unseres Daseins  
Kreise vollenden.

35

Nur allein der Mensch  
Bermag das Unmögliche:  
Er unterscheidet,  
Wählet und richtet;  
Er kann dem Augenblick  
Dauer verleihen.

40

Er allein darf  
Den Guten lohnend,  
Den Bösen strafen,  
Heilen und retten,

45

Alles Irrende, Schweißende  
Nützlich verbinden.

50      Und wir verehren  
Die Unsterblichen,  
Als wären sie Menschen,  
Täten im großen,  
Was der Beste im kleinen  
Tut oder möchte.

55      Der edle Mensch  
Sei hilfreich und gut!  
Unermüdet schaff' er  
Das Nützliche, Rechte,  
Sei uns ein Vorbild  
Jener gehnneten Wesen!

23

### III. MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



Erklärung eines alten Polzschniftes,  
vorstellend

#### 25. Hans Bathens poetische Sendung (1776).

5      In seiner Werkstatt Sonntags früh  
Steht unser teurer Meister hie,  
Sein schmuzig Schurzfell abgelegt,  
Einen saubern Feierwams er trägt,  
Läßt Bechdrath, Hammer und Kneipe rasten,  
Die Ahl steht an dem Arbeitslasten;  
Er ruht nun auch am sieb'nten Tag  
Von manchem Zug und manchem Schlag.

Wie er die Frühlingssonne spürt,  
Die Ruh ihm neue Arbeit gebiert:  
Er fühlt, daß er eine kleine Welt  
In seinem Gehirne brütend hält,  
Doch die fängt an zu wirken und leben,  
Doch er sie gerne möcht' von sich geben. 10

Er hätt' ein Auge treu und klug,  
Und wär' auch liebevoll genug,  
Zu schauen manches klar und rein,  
Und wieder alles zu machen sein;  
Hätt' auch eine Bunge, die sich ergoß,  
Und leicht und fein in Worte floß;  
Des täten die Mäusen sich erfreun,  
Wollten ihn zum Meistersänger weih'n. 15  
20

Da tritt herein ein junges Weib,  
Mit voller Brust und rundem Leib,  
Kräftig sie auf den Füßen steht,  
Grad, edel vor sich hin sie geht,  
Ohne mit Schlepp und Stetß zu schwänzen,  
Oder mit den Augen herum zu scharlenzen.  
Sie trägt einen Maßstab in ihrer Hand,  
Ihr Gürtel ist ein guld'ner Band, 25  
Hätt' auf dem Haupt ein Kornährkranz,  
Ihr Auge war lichten Tages Glanz;  
Man nennt sie tätig Ehrbarkeit,  
Sonst auch Großmut, Rechtfertigkeit. 30

Die tritt mit gutem Gruß herein;  
Er drob nicht mag verwundert sein.  
Denn wie sie ist, so gut und schön,  
Meint er, er hätt' sie lang gesehn. 35

(M 961)

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Die spricht: „Ich hab dich ausserlesen  
 Vor vielen in dem Weltwirrwesen,  
 Daß du sollst haben klare Sinnen,  
 Nichts Ungeschicklichs magst beginnen.  
 Wenn andre durcheinander rennen,  
 Sollst du's mit treuem Blick erkennen;  
 Wenn andre härmlich sich beklagen,  
 Sollst schwankweis deine Sach' fürtragen;  
 Sollst halten über Chr' und Recht,  
 In allem Ding sein schlicht und schlecht,  
 Frummeit und Tugend bieder preisen,  
 Das Böse mit seinem Namen heißen.  
 Nichts verlindert und nichts verwirret,  
 Nichts verzierlicht und nichts verkrizelt;  
 Sondern die Welt soll vor dir stehn,  
 Wie Albrecht Dürer sie hat gesehn,  
 Ihr festes Leben und Männlichkeit,  
 Ihre innre Kraft und Ständigkeit.  
 Der Natur-Genius an der Hand  
 Soll dich führen durch alle Land,  
 Soll dir zeigen alles Leben,  
 Der Menschen wunderliches Weben,  
 Ihr Wirren, Suchen, Stoßen und Treiben,  
 Schieben, Reißen, Drängen und Reiben,  
 Wie kunterbunt die Wirtschaft tollert,  
 Der Ameishauf durcheinander tollert;  
 Mag dir aber bei allem geschehn,  
 Als tät'st in einen Zauberlasten sehn.  
 Schreib' das dem Menschenvölk auf Erden,  
 Ob's ihm möchl' eine Wirkung werden.“  
 Da macht sie ihm ein Fenster auf,  
 Zeigt ihm draußen viel bunten Hauf,  
 Unter dem Himmel allerlei Wesen,  
 Wie ihr's mögt in seinen Schriften lesen,

Wie nun der liebe Meister sich An der Natur freut wunniglich, Da seht ihr an der andern Seiten Ein altes Weiblein zu ihm gleiten; Man nennet sie Historia, Mythologia, Fabula;	75
Sie schleppt mit leuchend-wankenden Schritten Eine große Tafel in Holz geschnitten; Darauf seht ihr mit weiten Ärmeln und Falten Gott Vater Kinderlehre halten, Adam, Eva, Paradies und Schlang', Sodom und Gomorra's Untergang,	80
Könnt auch die zwölf durchlauchtigen Frauen Die in einem Ehrenspiegel schauen; Dann allerlei Blutdurst, Frevel und Mord, Der zwölf Tyrannen Schandenport, Auch allerlei Lehr' und gute Weis, Könnt sehn St. Peter mit der Geiß,	85
Über der Welt Regiment unzufrieden, Von unserm Herrn zurecht beschieden. Auch war bemalt der weite Raum Ihres Kleids und Schlepps und auch der Saum Mit weltlich Tugend- und Laster-Geschicht.	90
Unser Meister das all ersicht Und freut sich dessen wundersam, Denn es dient sehr in seinen Kram. Bon wannen er sich eignet sehr Gut Exempel und gute Lehr', Erzählt das eben fig und treu, Als wär' er selbst gesyn dabei.	95
Sein Geist war ganz dahin gebannt, Er hätt' kein Auge davon verwandt, Hätt' er nicht hinter seinem Studen Hören mit Klappern und Schellen spüden.	100
	105

Da tät er einen Narren spüren  
 Mit Bock- und Affensprung' hofieren  
 Und mit ihm Schwank und Narreteiden  
 Ein lustig Zwischenspiel bereiten.  
 110 Schleppt hinter sich an einer Leinen  
 Alle Narren, groß und kleinen,  
 Dick und hager, gestreckt und krumb,  
 All zu witzig und all zu dumb.  
 115 Mit einem großen Farrenschwanz  
 Negiert er sie wie ein'n Affentanz,  
 Bespötet eines jeden Fürm,  
 Treibt sie ins Bad, schneid't ihnen die Wärm',  
 Und führt gar bitter viel Beschwerden,  
 120 Daß ihrer doch nicht wollen wen'ger werden.

Wie er sich sieht so um und um,  
 Kehrt ihm das fast den Kopf herum,  
 Wie er wollt' Worte zu allem finden?  
 Wie er möcht' so viel Schwall verbinden?  
 125 Wie er möcht' immer mutig bleiben,  
 So fort zu singen und zu schreiben?  
 Da steigt auf einer Wolke Saum  
 Herein zu's Oberfensters Raum  
 Die Muße, heilig anzuschauen,  
 130 Wie ein Bild unsrer lieben Frauen.  
 Die umgibt ihn mit ihrer Klarheit  
 Immer kräftig wirkender Wahrheit.  
 Sie spricht: „Ich komm' um dich zu weihن,  
 Nimm meinen Segen und Gedeihن!  
 135 Ein heilig Feuer, das in dir ruht,  
 Schlag' aus in hohe lichte Glut!  
 Doch daß das Leben, das dich treibt,  
 Immer bei holden Kräften bleibt;  
 Hab' ich in deinem innern Wesen  
 140 Nahrung und Balsam auserlesen,

Daß deine Seel' sei wonnereich,  
Einer Knospe im Tau gleich."

Da zeigt sie ihm hinter seinem Haus  
Heimlich zur Hintertür hinaus,  
In dem eng umgezäunten Garten,  
Ein holdes Mägdelein sitzend warten  
Am Büchlein, beim Hollunderstrauch;  
Mit abgesenktem Haupt und Aug',  
Sitzt unter einem Apfelbaum  
Und spürt die Welt rings um sich kaum,  
Hat Rosen in ihren Schoß gepflückt  
Und bindet ein Kränzlein sehr geschickt,  
Mit hellen Knospen und Blättern drein:  
Für wen mag wohl das Kränzel sein?  
So sitzt sie in sich selbst geneigt,  
In Hoffnungsfülle ihr Busen steigt,  
Ihr Wesen ist so ahndevoll,  
Weiß nicht, was sie sich wünschen soll,  
Und unter vieler Grillen Lauf  
Steigt wohl einmal ein Seufzer auf.

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Warum ist deine Stirn so trüb?  
Das, was dich dränget, süße Lieb',  
Ist volle Wonn' und Seligkeit,  
Die dir in Einem ist bereit,  
Der manches Schicksal wirrevoll  
An deinem Auge sich lindern soll;  
Der durch manch wonniglichen Kuß  
Wiedergeboren werden muß,  
Wie er den schlanken Leib umfaßt,  
Von aller Mühe findet Rast,  
Wie er ins liebe Ärmlein sinkt,  
Neue Lebenstag' und Kräfte trinkt.

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175      Und dir kehrt neues Jugendglück,  
 Deine Schalkheit kehret dir zurück.  
 Mit Nieden und manchen Schelmereien  
 Wirst ihn bald nagen, bald erfreuen.  
 So wird die Liebe nimmer alt,  
 Und wird der Dichter nimmer kalt!

180      Wie er so heimlich glücklich lebt,  
 Da droben in den Wolken schwebt  
 Ein Eichkranz, ewig jung belaubt,  
 Den segt die Nachwelt ihm aufs Haupt;  
 In Frohsprahl all das Volk verbannt,  
 Das seinen Meister je verkannt.

## 26. Seefahrt (1776).

Lange Tag' und Nächte stand mein Schiff befrachtet;  
 Günst'ger Winde harrend, saß mit treuen Freunden,  
 Mir Geduld und guten Mut erzechend,  
 Ich im Hafen.

5      Und sie waren doppelt ungeduldig:  
 Gerne gönnen wir die schnellste Reise,  
 Gern die hohe Fahrt dir; Güterfülle  
 Wartet drüben in den Welten deiner,  
 Wird Rückkehrendem in unsren Armen  
 10 Lieb' und Preis dir.

Und am frühen Morgen ward's Getümmel,  
 Und dem Schlaf entjaucht uns der Matrose,  
 Alles wimmelt, alles lebet, webet,  
 Mit dem ersten Segenshauch zu schiffen.

Und die Segel blühen in dem Hauche,  
Und die Sonne lockt mit Feuerliebe;  
Siehn die Segel, ziehn die hohen Wolken,  
Fauchzen an dem Ufer alle Freunde  
Hoffnungslieder nach, im Freudetaumel  
Reisefreuden wähnend, wie des Einschiffmorgens,  
Wie der ersten hohen Sternennächte. 20

Aber gottgesandte Wechselwinde treiben  
Seitwärts ihn der vorgestellten Fahrt ab,  
Und er scheint sich ihnen hinzugeben,  
Strebet leise sie zu überlisten,  
Treu dem Zweck auch auf dem schiefen Wege. 25

Aber aus der dumpfen grauen Ferne  
Kündet leisewandelnd sich der Sturm an,  
Drückt die Bögel nieder aufs Gewässer,  
Drückt der Menschen schwollend Herz darnieder,  
Und er kommt. Vor seinem starren Wütten  
Streckt der Schiffer klug die Segel nieder,  
Mit dem angstfüllten Balle spielen  
Wind und Wellen. 30

Und an jenem Ufer drüben stehen  
Freund' und Lieben, beben auf dem Festen:  
Ach, warum ist er nicht hier geblieben!  
Ach, der Sturm! Verschlagen weg vom Glücke!  
Soll der Gute so zu Grunde gehen?  
Ach, er sollte, ach, er könnte! Götter! 35

Doch er steht männlich an dem Steuer;  
Mit dem Schiffe spielen Wind und Wellen;  
Wind und Wellen nicht mit seinem Herzen:  
Herrschend blickt er auf die grimme Tiefe,  
Und vertrauet, scheiternd oder landend,  
Seinen Göttern. 45

## 27. Auf Miedings Tod (1782).

Welch ein Getümmel füllt Thaliens Haus?  
 Welch ein geschäftig Volk eilt ein und aus?  
 Von hohlen Brettern tönt des Hammers Schlag,  
 Der Sonntag feiert nicht, die Nacht wird Tag.

5    Was die Erfindung still und zart ersann,  
 Beschäftigt laut den rohen Zimmermann.  
 Ich sehe Hauenschild gedankenvoll;  
 Ist's Türk', ist's Heide, den er kleiden soll?

10    Und Schumann froh, als wär' er schon bezahlt,  
 Weil er einmal mit ganzen Farben malt.  
 Ich sehe Thielens leicht bewegten Schritt,  
 Der lustiger wird, jemehr er euch verschnitt.  
 Der tät'ge Jude läuft mit manchem Rest,  
 Und diese Gährung deutet auf ein Fest.

15    Allein, wie viele hab' ich hererzählt,  
 Und nenn' Ihn nicht, den Mann, der nie gefehlt,  
 Der finnreich schnell, mit schmerzbefladner Brust,  
 Den Lattenbau zu fügen wohl gewußt,  
 Das Brettgerüst, das, nicht von ihm belebt,

20    Wie ein Skelett an toten Drähten schwelt  
 Wo ist er? sagt! — Ihm war die Kunst so lieb,  
 Dass Kolin nicht, nicht Husten ihn vertrieb.  
 „Er liegt so krank, so schlimm es nie noch war!“  
 Ach Freunde! Weh! Ich fühle die Gefahr;

25    Hält Krankheit ihn zurück, so ist es Not,  
 Er ist nicht krank, nein, Kinder, er ist tot!

Wie? Mieding tot? erschallt bis unters Dach  
 Das hohle Haus, vom Echo lehrt ein Ach!  
 Die Arbeit stockt, die Hand wird jedem schwer,  
 30    Der Leim wird kalt, die Farbe fließt nicht mehr;

Ein jeder steht betäubt an seinem Ort,  
Und nur der Mittwoch treibt die Arbeit fort.

Sa, Mieding tot! O scharret sein Gebein  
Nicht undankbar wie manchen andern ein!  
Laßt seinen Sarg eröffnet, tretet her,  
Plagt jedem Bürger, der gelebt wie er,  
Und laßt am Rand des Grabes, wo wir stehn,  
Die Schmerzen in Betrachtung übergehn.

O Weimar! dir fiel ein besonder Los!  
Wie Bethlehem in Juda, klein und groß.  
Bald wegen Geist und Witz beruft dich weit  
Europens Mund, bald wegen Albernheit.  
Der stille Weise schaut und sieht geschwind,  
Wie zwei Extreme nah verschwistert sind.  
Eröffne du, die du besondere Lust  
Am Guten hast, der Rührung deine Brust!

Und du, o Muse, rufe weit und laut  
Den Namen aus, der heut uns still erbaut!  
Wie manchen, wert und unwert, hielt mit Glück  
Die sanfte Hand von ew'ger Nacht zurück;  
O laß auch Miedings Namen nicht vergehn!  
Laß ihn stets neu am Horizonte stehn!  
Renn' ihn der Welt, die kriegerisch oder fein  
Dem Schicksal dient und glaubt ihr Herr zu sein,  
Dem Rad der Zeit vergebens widersteht,  
Verwirrt, beschäftigt und betäubt sich dreht;  
Wo jeder, mit sich selbst genug geplagt,  
So selten nach dem nächsten Nachbar fragt,  
Doch gern im Geist nach fernen Zonen eilt  
Und Glück und Übel mit dem Fremden teilt.  
Verkünde laut und sag' es überall:  
Wo Einer fiel, seh' jeder seinen Fall!

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Du, Staatsmann, tritt herbei! Hier liegt der Mann,  
 Der, so wie du, ein schwer Geschäft begann;  
 65 Mit Lust zum Werke mehr, als zum Gewinn,  
 Schob er ein leicht Gerüst mit leichtem Sinn,  
 Den Wunderbau, der äußerlich entzückt,  
 Indes der Zauberer sich im Winkel drückt.  
 Er war's der säumend manchen Tag verlor,  
 70 So sehr ihn Autor und Urheur beschwor;  
 Und dann zuletzt, wenn es zum Treffen ging,  
 Des Stük's Glück an schwache Fäden hing.

Wie oft trat nicht die Herrschaft schon herein!  
 Es ward gepocht, die Symphonie fiel ein,  
 75 Daß er noch kletterte, die Stangen trug,  
 Die Seile zog und manchen Nagel schlug.  
 Oft glückt's ihm; kühn betrog er die Gefahr;  
 Doch auch ein Bock macht' ihm kein graues Haar.

Wer preißt genug des Mannes kluge Hand,  
 80 Wenn er aus Draht elast'sche Federn wand,  
 Vielfält'ge Pappen auf die Lättchen schlug,  
 Die Rolle fügte, die den Wagen trug;  
 Von Bindel, Blech, gefärbt Papier und Glas,  
 Dem Ausgang lächelnd, rings umgeben saß,  
 85 So treu dem unermüdlichen Beruf,  
 War er's, der Held und Schäfer leicht erschuf.  
 Was alles zarte schöne Seelen röhrt,  
 Ward treu von ihm nachahmend ausgeführt:  
 Des Nasens Grün, des Wassers Silberfall,  
 90 Der Vögel Sang, des Donners lauter Knall,  
 Der Laube Schatten und des Mondes Licht —  
 Ja, selbst ein Ungeheuer erschreckt' ihn nicht.

Wie die Natur manch widerwärt'ge Kraft  
 Verbindend zwingt und streitend Körper schafft:

So zwang er jedes Handwerk, jeden Fleiß;  
Des Dichters Welt entstand auf sein Geheiß;  
Und, so verdient, gewährt die Muse nur  
Den Namen ihm — Direktor der Natur. 95

Wer faßt nach ihm, voll Kühnheit und Verstand,  
Die vielen Bügel mit der einen Hand?  
Hier, wo sich jeder seines Weges treibt,  
Wo ein Faktotum unentbehrlich bleibt;  
Wo selbst der Dichter, heimlich voll Verdruß,  
Im Fall der Not die Richterpußen muß. 100

O forget nicht! Gar viele regt sein Tod!  
Sein Witz ist nicht zu erben, doch sein Brot;  
Und, ungleich ihm, denkt mancher Ehrenmann:  
Verdien' ich's nicht, wenn ich's nur essen kann. 105

Was stutzt ihr? Seht den schlecht verzierten Sarg,  
Auch das Gefolg scheint euch gering und karg;  
Wie! ruft ihr, wer so künstlich und so fein,  
So wirksam war, muß reich gestorben sein!  
Warum versagt man ihm den Trauerglanz,  
Den äußern Anstand letzter Ehre ganz? 110

Nicht so geschwind! Das Glück macht alles gleich,  
Den Faulen und den Täf'gen — Arm und Reich.  
Zum Gütersammeln war er nicht der Mann;  
Der Tag verzehrte, was der Tag gewann.  
Bedauert ihn, der, schaffend bis ans Grab,  
Was künstlich war, und nicht was Vorteil gab,  
In Hoffnung täglich weniger erwarb,  
Vertröstet lebte, und vertröstet starb. 120

Nun läßt die Glocken tönen, und zuletzt  
Werd' er mit lauter Trauer beigesetzt!

125 Wer ist's der ihm ein Lob zu Grabe bringt  
Es' noch die Erde rollt, das Chor verklingt?

Ihr Schwestern, die ihr, bald auf Thespis Karrn,  
Geschleppt von Eseln und umschrien von Narrn,

130 Vor Hunger kaum, vor Schande nie bewahrt,  
Von Dorf zu Dorf, euch feil zu bieten, fahrt;  
Bald wieder durch der Menschen Gunst beglückt,  
In Herrlichkeit der Welt die Welt entzündt;  
Die Mädchen eurer Art sind selten lang,  
Kommt, gebt die schönsten Kränze diesem Sarg!

135 Vereinet hier teilnehmend euer Leid,  
Zahlt, was ihr ihm, was ihr uns schuldig seid!  
Als euern Tempel grause Glut verheert,  
Wart ihr von uns drum weniger geehrt?  
Wie viel Altäre stiegen vor euch auf!

140 Wie manches Rauchwerk brachte man euch drauf!  
An wie viel Bläzen lag, vor euch gebückt,  
Ein schwer befriedigt Publikum entzündt!  
In engen Hütten und im reichen Saal,  
Auf Höhen Ettersburgs, in Tiefurts Tal,  
145 Im leichten Zelt, auf Teppichen der Bracht,  
Und unter dem Gewölb' der hohen Nacht,  
Erschient ihr, die ihr vielgestaltet seid,  
Im Reitrock' bald und bald im Galalleid.

150 Auch das Gefolg, das um euch sich ergießt,  
Dem der Geschmac die Türen ekel schließt,  
Das leichte, tolle, schedige Geschlecht,  
Es kam zu Hauf und immer kam es recht.

155 An weiße Wand bringt dort der Zauberstab  
Ein Schattenvolk aus mytholog'schem Grab.  
Im Possenspiel regt sich die alte Zeit,  
Gutherzig, doch mit Ungezogenheit.

Was Gallier und Britte sich erdacht,  
Ward, wohlverdeutscht, hier Deutschen vorgebracht;  
Und oftmals liehen Wärme, Leben, Glanz  
Dem armen Dialog — Gesang und Tanz. 160  
Des Karnevals zerstreuter Flitterwelt  
Ward sinnreich Spiel und Handlung zugestellt.  
Dramatisch selbst erschienen hergesandt  
Drei Könige aus fernem Morgenland;  
Und sittham bracht auf reinlichem Altar 165  
Dianens Priesterin ihr Opfer dar.  
Nun ehrt uns auch in dieser Trauerzeit!  
Gebt uns ein Zeichen! Denn ihr seid nicht weit.

Ihr Freunde, Platz! Weicht einen kleinen Schritt!  
Seht, wer da kommt und festlich näher tritt? 170  
Sie ist es selbst; die Gute fehlt uns nie;  
Wir sind erhört, die Mäusen senden sie.  
Ihr kennt sie wohl; sie ist's, die stets gefällt;  
Als eine Blume zeigt sie sich der Welt:  
Zum Muster wuchs das schöne Bild empor, 175  
Vollendet nun, sie ist's und stellt es vor.  
Es gönnten ihr die Mäusen jede Kunst,  
Und die Natur erschuf in ihr die Kunst.  
So häuft sie willig jeden Reiz auf sich,  
Und selbst dein Name ziert, Corona, dich. 180

Sie tritt herbei. Seht sie gefällig stehn!  
Nur absichtslos, doch wie mit Absicht schön.  
Und hocherstaunt seht ihr in ihr vereint  
Ein Ideal, das Künstlern nur erscheint.

Anständig führt die leis' erhobne Hand  
Den schönsten Kranz, umknüpft von Trauerband. 185  
Der Rose frohes volles Angesicht,  
Das treue Veilchen, der Narcisse Licht,

190 Vielfält'ger Nellen, eitler Tulpen Pracht,  
 Von Mädchenhand geschickt hervorgebracht,  
 Durch schlungen von der Myrte sanfter Zier,  
 Vereint die Kunst zum Trauerschmucke hier;  
 Und durch den schwarzen leichtgeknüpfsten Flor  
 Sticht eine Vorbeerspitze still hervor.

195 Es schweigt das Volk. Mit Augen voller Glanz  
 Wirft sie ins Grab den wohlverdienten Kranz.  
 Sie öffnet ihren Mund, und lieblich fließt  
 Der weiche Ton, der sich ums Herz ergießt.  
 Sie spricht: Den Dank für das, was du getan,

200 Geduldet, nimm, du Abgeschiedner, an!  
 Der Gute, wie der Böse, müht sich viel,  
 Und beide bleiben weit von ihrem Ziel.  
 Dir gab ein Gott in holder steter Kraft  
 Zu deiner Kunst die ew'ge Leidenschaft.

205 Sie war's, die dich zur bösen Zeit erhielt,  
 Mit der du krank, als wie ein Kind, gespielt,  
 Die auf den blässen Mund ein Lächeln rief,  
 In deren Arm dein müdes Haupt entschlief,  
 Ein jeder, dem Natur ein Gleiches gab,

210 Besuche pilgernd dein bescheiden Grab!  
 Fest steht dein Sarg in wohlgegönnter Ruh;  
 Mit locker Erde deckt ihn leise zu,  
 Und sanfter als des Lebens Liege dann  
 Auf dir des Grabs Bürde, guter Mann!

## 28. Ilmenau (1783).

Anmutig Tall! du immergrüner Hain!  
 Mein Herz begrüßt euch wieder auf das Beste;  
 Entfaltet mir die schwerbehangnen Äste,  
 Nehmt freundlich mich in eure Schatten ein,

Erquict von euren Höhn, am Tag der Lieb' und Lust, 5  
 Mit frischer Lust und Balsam meine Brust!

Wie kehrt' ich oft mit wechselndem Geschicke,  
 Erhabner Berg! an deinen Fuß zurücke.  
 O laß mich heut an deinen sachten Höhn  
 Ein jugendlich, ein neues Eden sehn! 10  
 Ich hab' es wohl auch mit um euch verdienet:  
 Ich sorge still, indes ihr ruhig grünet.

Läßt mich vergessen, daß auch hier die Welt  
 So manch Geschöpf in Erdefesseln hält,  
 Der Landmann leichtem Sand den Samen anvertraut 15  
 Und seinen Kohl dem frechen Wilde baut,  
 Der Knappe karges Brot in Klüsten sucht,  
 Der Köhler zittert, wenn der Jäger flucht.  
 Verjüngt euch mir, wie ihr es oft getan,  
 Als fing ich heut ein neues Leben an. 20

Ihr seid mir hold, ihr gönn't mir diese Träume,  
 Sie schmeicheln mir und locken alte Fleime.  
 Mir wieder selbst, von allen Menschen fern,  
 Wie bad' ich mich in euren Düften gern!  
 Melodisch rauscht die hohe Tanne wieder,  
 Melodisch eilt der Wasserfall hernieder; 25  
 Die Wolke sinkt, der Nebel drückt ins Tal,  
 Und es ist Nacht und Dämmerung auf einmal.

Im finstern Walde, beim Liebesblick der Sterne,  
 Wo ist mein Pfad, den sorglos ich verlor?  
 Welch seltne Stimmen hör' ich in der Ferne?  
 Sie schallen wechselnd an dem Fels empor.  
 Ich eile sacht zu sehn, was es bedeutet,  
 Wie von des Hirsches Ruf der Jäger still geleitet. 80

35 Wo bin ich? Ist's ein Zaubermaerchenland?  
 Welch naechtliches Gelag am Fuß der Felsenwand?  
 Bei kleinen Hütten, dicht mit Reis bedecket,  
 Seh' ich sie froh ans Feuer hingestrecket.  
 Es dringt der Glanz hoch durch den Fichtenaal;

40 Am niedern Herde kocht ein rohes Mahl;  
 Sie scherzen laut, indeffen bald geleeret,  
 Die Flasche frisch im Kreise wiederkehret.

Sagt, wem vergleich' ich diese muntre Schar?  
 Von wannen kommt sie? um wohin zu ziehen?  
 45 Wie ist an ihr doch alles wunderbar!  
 Soll ich sie grüßen? soll ich vor ihr fliehen?  
 Ist es der Jäger wildes Geisterheer?  
 Sind's Gnomen, die hier Zauberkünste treiben?  
 Ich seh' im Busch der kleinen Feuer mehr;  
 50 Es schaudert mich, ich wage kaum zu bleiben.  
 Ist's der Ägyptier verdächtiger Aufenthalt?  
 Ist es ein flüchtiger Fürst wie im Ardennen-Wald?  
 Soll ich Verirrter hier in den verschlungnen Gründen  
 Die Geister Shakespeare's gar verkörpern finden?  
 55 Ja, der Gedanke führt mich eben recht:  
 Sie sind es selbst, wo nicht ein gleich Geschlecht!  
 Unbändig schwelgt ein Geist in ihrer Mitten,  
 Und durch die Höheit fühl' ich edle Sitten.

Wie nennt ihr ihn? Wer ist's, der dort gebückt  
 60 Nachlässig stark die breiten Schultern drückt?  
 Er sitzt zunächst gelassen an der Flamme,  
 Die markige Gestalt aus altem Heldenstamme.  
 Er saugt begierig am geliebten Rohr,  
 Es steigt der Dampf an seiner Stirn empor.  
 65 Gutmütig trocken weiß er Freud' und Lachen  
 Im ganzen Zirkel laut zu machen,

Wenn er mit ernstlichem Gesicht  
Barbarisch bunt in fremder Mundart spricht.

Wer ist der andre, der sich nieder  
An einen Sturz des alten Baumes lehnt,  
Und seine langen feingestalten Glieder  
Ekstatisch faul nach allen Seiten dehnt,  
Und, ohne daß die Becher auf ihn hören,  
Mit Geistesflug sich in die Höhe schwingt,  
Und von dem Tanz der himmelhohen Sphären  
Ein monotones Lied mit großer Inbrunst singt?  
70  
75

Doch scheinet allen etwas zu gebrechen.  
Ich höre sie auf einmal leise sprechen,  
Des Jünglings Ruhe nicht zu unterbrechen,  
Der dort am Ende, wo das Tal sich schließt, 80  
In einer Hütte, leicht gezimmert,  
Vor der ein letzter Blick des kleinen Feuers schimmert,  
Vom Wasserfall umrauscht, des milden Schlafs genießt.  
Mich treibt das Herz nach jener Kluft zu wandern,  
Ich schleiche still und scheide von den andern. 85

Sei mir gegrüßt, der hier in später Nacht  
Gedanken voll an dieser Schwelle wacht!  
Was sitzt du entfernt von jenen Freuden?  
Du scheinst mir auf was Wichtiges bedacht.  
Was ist's, daß du in Sinnen dich verlierest,  
Und nicht einmal dein kleines Feuer schürest?

„O frage nicht! denn ich bin nicht bereit,  
Des Fremden Neugier leicht zu stillen;  
Sogar verbitt' ich deinen guten Willen;  
Hier ist zu schweigen und zu leiden Zeit.  
Ich bin dir nicht im stande selbst zu sagen  
Woher ich sei, wer mich hierher gesandt;

Bon fremden Zonen bin ich her verschlagen  
Und durch die Freundschaft festgebannt.

100 Wer kennt sich selbst? wer weiß was er vermag?  
Hat nie der Mutige Verwegnes unternommen?  
Und was du tust, sagt erst der andre Tag,  
War es zum Schaden oder Frommen.  
Wieß nicht Prometheus selbst die reine Himmelsglut

105 Auf frischen Ton vergötternd niederfließen?  
Und konnt' er mehr als irdisch Blut  
Durch die belebten Adern gießen?  
Ich brachte reines Feuer vom Altar;  
Was ich entzündet, ist nicht reine Flamme.

110 Der Sturm vermehrt die Glut und die Gefahr,  
Ich schwanke nicht, indem ich mich verdamme.

Und wenn ich unklug Mut und Freiheit sang  
Und Redlichkeit und Freiheit sonder Zwang,  
Stolz auf sich selbst und herzliches Behagen,  
Erwarb ich mir der Menschen schöne Kunst:  
Doch ach! ein Gott versagte mir die Kunst,

115 Die arme Kunst, mich künstlich zu betrügen.  
Nun sitz' ich hier zugleich erhoben und gedrückt,  
Unschuldig und gestraft, und schuldig und beglückt.

120 Doch rede sach! denn unter diesem Dach  
Ruht all mein Wohl und all mein Ungemach:  
Ein edles Herz, vom Wege der Natur  
Durch enges Schicksal abgeleitet,  
Das, ahnungsvoll, nun auf der rechten Spur

125 Bald mit sich selbst und bald mit Bauberschatten streitet  
Und was ihm das Geschick durch die Geburt geschenkt  
Mit Müh und Schweiß erst zu erringen denkt.  
Kein liebevolles Wort kann seinen Geist enthüllen  
Und kein Gesang die hohen Wogen stillen.

Wer kann der Raupe, die am Zweige kriecht,  
Von ihrem künft'gen Futter sprechen?  
Und wer der Puppe, die am Boden liegt,  
Die zarte Schale helfen durchzubrechen?  
Es kommt die Zeit, sie drängt sich selber los  
Und eilt auf Fittigen der Rose in den Schoß. 130  
135

Gewiß, ihm geben auch die Jahre  
Die rechte Richtung seiner Kraft.  
Noch ist bei tiefer Neigung für das Wahre  
Ihm Irrtum eine Leidenschaft.  
Der Vorwitz lockt ihn in die Wette,  
Kein Fels ist ihm zu schroff, kein Steg zu schmal;  
Der Unfall lauert an der Seite  
Und stürzt ihn in den Arm der Qual.  
Dann treibt die schmerzlich überspannte Regung  
Gewaltsam ihn bald da bald dort hinaus,  
Und von unmutiger Bewegung  
Ruft er unmutig wieder aus.  
Und düster wild an heitern Tagen,  
Unbändig ohre froh zu sein,  
Schläft er, an Seel' und Leib verwundet und zerschlagen, 150  
Auf einem harten Lager ein:  
Indessen ich hier still und atmend kaum  
Die Augen zu den freien Sternen lehre,  
Und, halb erwacht und halb im schweren Traum,  
Mich kaum des schweren Traums erwehre." 155

Verschwinde, Traum!  
Wie dank' ich, Mussen, euch,  
Dass ihr mich heut auf einen Pfad gestelltet,  
Wo auf ein einzig Wort die ganze Gegend gleich  
Zum schönsten Tage sich erhellet;  
Die Wolke flieht, der Nebel fällt,  
Die Schatten sind hinweg. Ihr Götter, Preis und Bonnel 160

Es leuchtet mir die wahre Sonne,  
Es lebt mir eine schönre Welt;  
 165 Das ängstliche Gesicht ist in die Luft zerronnen,  
Ein neues Leben ist's, es ist schon lang' begonnen.

Ich sehe hier, wie man nach langer Reise  
Im Vaterland sich wieder kennt,  
Ein ruhig Volk im stillen Fleiße  
 170 Benützen, was Natur an Gaben ihm gegönnt.  
Der Faden eilet von dem Rocken  
Des Webers raschem Stuhle zu;  
Und Seil und Käbel wird in längrer Ruh  
Nicht am verbrochenen Schachte stocken;  
 175 Es wird der Trug entdeckt, die Ordnung kehrt zurück,  
Es folgt Gedeihn und festes ird'sches Glück.

So mög', o Fürst, der Winkel deines Landes  
Ein Vorbild deiner Tage sein!  
Du kennest lang die Pflichten deines Standes  
 180 Und schränkest nach und nach die freie Seele ein.  
Der kann sich manchen Wunsch gewähren,  
Der kalt sich selbst und seinem Willen lebt;  
Allein wer andre wohl zu leiten strebt,  
Muß fähig sein, viel zu entbehren.

185 So wandle du — der Lohn ist nicht gering —  
Nicht schwankend hin, wie jener Sämann ging,  
Dass bald ein Korn, des Zufalls leichtes Spiel,  
Hier auf den Weg, dort zwischen Dornen fiel;  
Nein! streue klug wie reich, mit männlich steter Hand,

190 Den Segen aus auf ein geackert Land;  
Dann laß es ruhn: die Ernte wird erscheinen  
Und dich beglücken und die Deinen.

## 29. Amor als Landschaftsmaler (1788).

Saß ich früh auf einer Felsenspitze,  
 Sah mit starren Augen in den Nebel;  
 Wie ein grau grundiertes Tuch gespannet,  
 Deckt' er alles in die Breit' und Höhe.

Stellt' ein Knabe sich mir an die Seite, 5  
 Sagte: Lieber Freund, wie magst du starrend  
 Auf das leere Tuch gelassen schauen?  
 Hast du denn zum Malen und zum Bilden  
 Alle Lust auf ewig wohl verloren?

Sah ich an das Kind und dachte heimlich: 10  
 Will das Bübchen doch den Meister machen!

Willst du immer trüb' und müßig bleiben,  
 Sprach der Knabe, kann nichts Kluges werden:  
 Sieh, ich will dir gleich ein Bildchen malen,  
 Dich ein hübsches Bildchen malen lehren. 15

Und er richtete den Zeigefinger,  
 Der so rötlich war wie eine Rose,  
 Nach dem weiten ausgespannten Teppich,  
 Fing mit seinem Finger an zu zeichnen:

Oben malt' er eine schöne Sonne, 20  
 Die mir in die Augen mächtig glänzte,  
 Und den Saum der Wolken macht' er golden,  
 Ließ die Strahlen durch die Wolken dringen;  
 Malte dann die zarten leichten Wipfel  
 Frisch erquickter Bäume, zog die Hügel, 25  
 Einen nach dem andern, frei dahinter;  
 Unten ließ er's nicht an Wasser fehlen,  
 Zeichnete den Fluß so ganz natürlich,

80 Daß er schien im Sonnenstrahl zu glitzern,  
Daß er schien am hohen Rand zu rauschen.

Uch, da standen Blumen an dem Flusse,  
Und da waren Farben auf der Wiese,  
Gold und Schmelz und Purpur und ein Grünes,  
Alles wie Smaragd und wie Karfunkel!  
.85 Hell und rein lasiert' er drauf den Himmel  
Und die blauen Berge fern und ferner,  
Daß ich ganz entzückt und neugeboren  
Bald den Maler, bald das Bild beschauten.

40 Hab' ich doch, so sagt' er, dir bewiesen,  
Daß ich dieses Handwerk gut verstehe;  
Doch es ist das Schwerste noch zurücke.

Beichnete darnach mit spitzem Finger  
Und mit großer Sorgfalt an dem Wäldchen,  
G'rad' ans Ende, wo die Sonne kräftig  
45 Von dem hellen Boden niederglänzte,  
Beichnete das allerliebste Mädelchen,  
Wohlgebildet, zierlich angesteidet,  
Frische Wangen unter braunen Haaren,  
Und die Wangen waren von der Farbe,  
50 Wie das Fingerchen, das sie gebildet.

O du Knabel rief ich, welch ein Meister  
Hat in seine Schule dich genommen,  
Daß du so geschwind und so natürlich  
Alles klug beginnst und gut vollendest?

55 Da ich noch so rede, sieh, da röhret  
Sich ein Windchen, und bewegt die Gipfel,  
Kräuselt alle Wellen auf dem Flusse,  
Füllt den Schleier des vollkommenen Mädelchens,

Und was mich Erstaunten mehr erstaunte,  
Fängt das Mädchen an den Fuß zu rühren, 60  
Geht zu kommen, nähert sich dem Orte,  
Wo ich mit dem losen Lehrer sitze.

Da nun alles, alles sich bewegte,  
Bäume, Fluß und Blumen und der Schleier  
Und der zarte Fuß der Allerschönsten; 65  
Glaubt ihr wohl, ich sei auf meinem Felsen,  
Wie ein Felsen, still und fest geblieben?

### 30. (Karl August) (1789).

Klein ist unter den Fürsten Germaniens freilich der meine;  
Kurz und schmal ist sein Land, mäßig nur, was er vermag.  
Aber so wende nach innen, so wende nach außen die Kräfte  
Feder; da wär's ein Fest, Deutscher mit Deutschen zu sein.  
Doch was priesest du ihn, den Taten und Werke verkünden? 5  
Und bestochen erschien' deine Verehrung vielleicht;  
Denn mir hat er gegeben, was Große selten gewähren,  
Neigung, Muße, Vertraun, Felder und Garten und Haus.  
Niemand braucht' ich zu danken als Ihm, und manches  
bedurf't ich,  
Der ich mich auf den Erwerb schlecht, als ein Dichter, 10  
verstand.  
Hat mich Europa gelobt, was hat mir Europa gegeben?  
Nichts! Ich habe, wie schwer! meine Gedichte bezahlt.  
Deutschland ahmte mich nach, und Frankreich mochte mich  
lesen.  
England! freundlich empfingst du den zerrütteten Gast.  
Doch was fördert es mich, daß auch sogar der Chinese 15  
Malet, mit ängstlicher Hand, Werthern und Lotten auf  
Glas?  
Niemals frug ein Kaiser nach mir, es hat sich kein König  
Um mich betümmt, und Er war mir August und Mäcen.

## 31. Legende vom Hufeisen (1797?).

Als noch verkannt und sehr gering,  
 Unser Herr auf der Erde ging,  
 Und viele Jünger sich zu ihm fanden,  
 Die sehr selten sein Wort verstanden,  
 Liebt' er sich gar über die Masken,  
 Seinen Hof zu halten auf der Straßen,  
 Weil unter des Himmels Angesicht  
 Man immer besser und freier spricht.  
 5  
 Er ließ sie da die höchsten Lehren  
 Aus seinem heiligen Munde hören;  
 Besonders durch Gleichnis und Exempel  
 Macht' er jeden Markt zum Tempel.

So schlendert' er in Geistes Ruh  
 Mit ihnen einst einem Städtchen zu,  
 Sah etwas blinken auf der Straß',  
 Das ein zerbrochen Hufeisen war.  
 15  
 Er sagte zu St. Peter drauf:  
 Heb' doch einmal das Eisen auf!  
 St. Peter war nicht aufgeräumt,  
 Er hatte so eben im Gehen geträumt,  
 So was vom Regiment der Welt,  
 20  
 Was einem jeden wohlgefällt:  
 Denn im Kopf hat das keine Schranken;  
 Das waren so seine liebsten Gedanken.  
 25  
 Nun war der Fund ihm viel zu klein,  
 Hätte müssen Kron' und Szepter sein;  
 Über wie sollt' er seinen Rücken  
 Nach einem halben Hufeisen bücken?  
 Er also sich zur Seite lehrt  
 30  
 Und tut als hätt' er's nicht gehört.

Der Herr, nach seiner Langmut, drauf  
Habt selber das Hufeisen auf,  
Und tut auch weiter nicht dergleichen.  
Als sie nun bald die Stadt erreichen,  
Geht er vor eines Schmiedes Tür,      35  
Nimmt von dem Mann drei Pfennig dafür.  
Und als sie über den Markt nun gehen,  
Sieht er daselbst schöne Kirschen stehen,  
Kauft ihrer, so wenig oder so viel,  
Als man für einen Dreier geben will,      40  
Die er sodann nach seiner Art  
Ruhig im Ärmel aufbewahrt.

Nun ging's zum andern Tor hinaus,  
Durch Wies' und Felder ohne Haus,  
Auch war der Weg von Bäumen bloß;      45  
Die Sonne schien, die Hitze war groß,  
So daß man viel an solcher Stätt'  
Für einen Trunk Wasser gegeben hätt'.  
Der Herr geht immer voraus vor allen,  
Läßt unversehens eine Kirsche fallen.      50  
St. Peter war gleich dahinter her,  
Als wenn es ein goldner Apfel wär';  
Das Beerlein schmeckte seinem Gaum.  
Der Herr, nach einem kleinen Raum,  
Ein ander Kirschlein zur Erde schickt,      55  
Wonach St. Peter schnell sich bückt.  
So läßt der Herr ihn seinen Rücken  
Gar vielmals nach den Kirschen büdden.  
Das dauert eine ganze Zeit.  
Dann sprach der Herr mit Heiterkeit:      60  
Tätst du zur rechten Zeit dich regen,  
Hättst du's bequemer haben mögen.  
Wer geringe Ding' wenig acht'lt,  
Sich um geringere Mühe macht.

## 32. Bueignung des Faust (1797).

Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten,  
 Die früh sich einst dem trüben Blick gezeigt.  
 Versuch' ich wohl, euch diesmal fest zu halten?  
 Fühl' ich mein Herz noch jenem Wahn geneigt?  
 5 Ihr drängt euch zu! Nun gut, so mögt ihr walten,  
 Wie ihr aus Dunst und Nebel um mich steigt;  
 Mein Busen fühlt sich jugendlich erschüttert  
 Vom Zauberhauch, der euren Zug umwittert.

Ihr bringt mit euch die Bilder froher Tage,  
 10 Und manche liebe Schatten steigen auf;  
 Gleich einer alten, halbverklungenen Sage  
 Kommt erste Lieb' und Freundschaft mit heraus;  
 Der Schmerz wird neu, es wiederholt die Klage  
 Des Lebens labyrinthisch irren Lauf,  
 15 Und nennt die Guten, die, um schöne Stunden  
 Vom Glück getäuscht, vor mir hinweggeschwunden.

Sie hören nicht die folgenden Gesänge,  
 Die Seelen, denen ich die ersten sang;  
 Verstoben ist das freundliche Gedränge,  
 20 Verklungen ach! der erste Wiederklang.  
 Mein Leid ertönt der unbekannten Menge,  
 Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang,  
 Und was sich sonst an meinem Lied erfreuet,  
 Wenn es noch lebt, irrt in der Welt zerstreuet.

25 Und mich ergreift ein längst entwöhntes Sehnen  
 Nach jenem stillen ernsten Geisterreich;  
 Es schwebet nun in unbestimmten Tönen  
 Mein lisplnd Lied, der Volsharfe gleich,

Ein Schauer fasst mich, Träne folgt den Tränen,  
 Das strenge Herz es fühlt sich mild und weich; 30  
 Was ich besitze seh' ich wie im weiten,  
 Und was verschwand wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.

### 33. Epilog zu Schillers Glocke (1805)

Und so geschah's! Dem friedenreichen Klange  
 Bewegte sich das Land und segenbar  
 Ein frisches Glück erschien; im Hochgesange  
 Begrüßten wir das junge Fürstenpaar;  
 Im Vollgewühl, in lebensregem Drange 5  
 Vermischte sich die tät'ge Völkerschar,  
 Und festlich ward an die geschmückten Stufen  
 Die Huldigung der Künste vorgerufen.

Da hör' ich schrechhaft mitternächt'ges Läuten,  
 Das dumpf und schwer die Trauertöne schwelst. 10  
 Ist's möglich? Soll es unsren Freund bedeuten,  
 An den sich jeder Wunsch geklammert hält?  
 Den Lebenswürd'gen soll der Tod erbeuten?  
 Ach! wie verwirrt solch ein Verlust die Welt!  
 Ach! was zerstört ein solcher Miß den Seinen! 15  
 Nun weint die Welt und sollten wir nicht weinen?

Denn er war unser! Wie bequem gesellig  
 Den hohen Mann der gute Tag gezeigt,  
 Wie bald sein Ernst, anschließend, wohlgefällig,  
 Zur Wechselrede heiter sich geneigt, 20  
 Bald raschgewandt, geistreich und sicherstellig  
 Der Lebensplane tiefen Sinn erzeugt,  
 Und furchtbar sich in Rat und Tat ergossen;  
 Das haben wir erfahren und genossen.

25 Denn er war unser! Mag das stolze Wort  
 Den lauten Schmerz gewaltig übertönen!  
 Er mochte sich bei uns, im sichern Port,  
 Nach wildem Sturm zum Dauernden gewöhnen.  
 Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort  
 30 Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen,  
 Und hinter ihm, in wesenlosem Scheine,  
Lag, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine.

11

Nun schmückt er sich die hohe Gartenzinne,  
 Von wannen er der Sterne Wort vernahm,  
 35 Das dem gleich ew'gen, gleich lebend'gen Sinne  
 Geheimnißvoll und klar entgegen kam.  
 Dort, sich und uns zu kostlichem Gewinne,  
 Verwechselt er die Seiten wundersam,  
 Begegnet so, im Würdigsten beschäftigt,  
 40 Der Dämmerung, der Nacht, die uns entkräftigt.

Ihm schwollen der Geschicht'e Flut auf Fluten,  
 Verspülend, was getadelt, was gelobt,  
 Der Erdbeherr'scher wilde Heeresgluten,  
 Die in der Welt sich grimmig ausgetobt,  
 45 Im niedrig Schrecklichsten, im höchsten Guten  
 Nach ihrem Wesen deutlich durchgeprob't. —  
 Nun sank der Mond und, zu erneuter Wonne,  
 Vom klaren Berg herüber stieg die Sonne.

Nun glühte seine Wange rot und röter  
 50 Von jener Jugend, die uns nie entfliegt,  
 Von jenem Mut, der, früher oder später,  
 Den Widerstand der stumpfen Welt besiegt,  
 Von jenem Glauben, der sich stets erhöhter  
 Bald kühn hervordrängt, bald geduldig schmiegt,  
 55 Damit das Gute wirke, wachse, fromme,  
 Damit der Tag dem Edlen endlich komme.

Doch hat er, so geübt, so vollgehaltig  
 Dies bretterne Gerüste nicht verschmäht;  
 Hier schildert er das Schicksal, das gewaltig  
 Von Tag zu Nacht die Erdenachse dreht, 60  
 Und manches tiefe Werk hat, reichgestaltig,  
 Den Wert der Kunst, des Künstlers Wert erhöht.  
 Er wendete die Blüte höchsten Strebens,  
 Das Leben selbst, an dieses Bild des Lebens.

Ihr kanntet ihn, wie er mit Riesen schritte  
 Den Kreis des Wollens, des Vollbringens maß,  
 Durch Zeit und Land, der Völker Sinn und Sitte,  
 Das dunkle Buch mit heiterm Blicke las;  
 Doch wie er atemlos in unsrer Mitte  
 In Leiden bangte, kümmerlich genas, 70  
 Das haben wir in traurig schönen Jahren,  
 Denn er war unser, leidend mit erfahren.

Ihn, wenn er vom zerrüttenden Gewühle  
 Des bittern Schmerzes wieder aufgeblüht,  
 Ihn haben wir dem lästigen Gefühl  
 Der Gegenwart, der stockenden, entrückt, 75  
 Mit guter Kunst und ausgesuchtem Spiele  
 Den neubelebten edlen Sinn erquidt,  
 Und noch am Abend vor den letzten Sonnen  
 Ein holdes Lächeln glücklich abgewonnen. 80

Er hatte früh das strenge Wort gelesen,  
 Dem Leiden war er, war dem Tod vertraut.  
 So schied er nun, wie er so oft genesen;  
 Nun schreibt uns das, wofür uns längst gegraut.  
 Doch schon erblicket sein verklärtes Wesen  
 Sich hier verklärt, wenn es hernieder schaut. 85  
 Was Mitwelt sonst an ihm bellagt, getadelt,  
 Es hat's der Tod, es hat's die Zeit geadelt.

Auch manche Geister, die mit ihm gerungen,  
 90 Sein groß Verdienst unwillig anerkannt,  
 Sie fühlen sich von seiner Kraft durchdrungen,  
 In seinem Kreise willig festgebannt:  
 Zum Höchsten hat er sich emporgeschwungen,  
 Mit allem, was wir schäzen, eng verwandt.  
 95 So feiert Ihn! Denn was dem Mann das Leben  
 Nur halb erteilt, soll ganz die Nachwelt geben.

So bleibt er uns, der vor so manchen Jahren —  
 Schon zehn sind's! — von uns sich weggekehrt!  
 Wir haben alle segenreich erfahren,  
 100 Die Welt verdankt ihm, was er sie gelehrt;  
 Schon längst verbreitet sich's in ganze Scharen,  
 Das Eigenste, was ihm allein gehört.  
 Er glänzt uns vor, wie ein Komet entschwindend,  
 Unendlich Licht mit seinem Licht verbindend.



IV. BALLADS.



34. Der König in Thule (1774?)

Es war ein König in Thule,  
 Gar treu bis an das Grab,  
 Dem sterbend seine Buhle  
 Einen goldnen Becher gab.

Es ging ihm nichts darüber,  
Er leert' ihn jeden Schmaus;  
Die Augen gingen ihm über,  
So oft er trank daraus.

5

Und als er kam zu sterben,  
Zähl't er seine Städt' im Reich,  
Gönnt' alles seinem Erben,  
Den Becher nicht zugleich.

10

Er saß beim Königsmahle,  
Die Ritter um ihn her,  
Auf hohem Vätersaale,  
Dort auf dem Schloß am Meer.

15

Dort stand der alte Becher,  
Trank letzte Lebensglut,  
Und warf den heil'gen Becher  
Hinunter in die Flut.

20

Er sah ihn stürzen, trinken  
Und sinken tief ins Meer.  
Die Augen täten ihm sinken;  
Trank nie einen Tropfen mehr.

### 35. Der Fischer (1778?).

Das Wasser rauscht', das Wasser schwoll,  
Ein Fischer saß daran,  
Sah nach dem Angel ruhevoll,  
Kühl bis ans Herz hinan.  
Und wie er sitzt und wie er lauscht,  
Teilt sich die Flut empor;

5

Aus dem bewegten Wasser rauscht  
Ein feuchtes Weib hervor.

Sie sang zu ihm, sie sprach zu ihm:  
Was lockt du meine Brut  
Mit Menschenwitz und Menschenlist  
Hinauf in Todesglut?  
Ach wüßtest du, wie's Fischlein ist  
So wohlig auf dem Grund,  
15 Du stiegst herunter wie du bist,  
Und würdest erst gesund.

Läbt sich die liebe Sonne nicht,  
Der Mond sich nicht im Meer?  
Kehrt wellenatmend ihr Gesicht  
Nicht doppelt schöner her?  
20 Lockt dich der tiefe Himmel nicht,  
Das feuchtverklärte Blau?  
Lockt dich dein eigen Angesicht  
Nicht her in ew'gen Tau?

25 Das Wasser rauscht', das Wasser schwoll,  
Neigt ihm den nackten Fuß;  
Sein Herz wuchs ihm so sehnsuchtsvoll,  
Wie bei der Liebsten Gruß.  
Sie sprach zu ihm, sie sang zu ihm;  
30 Da war's um ihn geschehn:  
Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin,  
Und ward nicht mehr gesehn.

### 36. Erlkönig (1782?).

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?  
Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;

Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm,  
Er fasst ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.

Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht? — 5  
Siehst, Vater, du den Erlkönig nicht?  
Den Erlenkönig mit Kron' und Schweif? —  
Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif. —

„Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!  
„Gärt schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir; 10  
„Manch bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand;  
„Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand.“ —

Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht,  
Was Erlenkönig mir leise verspricht? —  
Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind; 15  
In dünnen Blättern säuselt der Wind. —

„Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn?  
„Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön;  
„Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn,  
„Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein.“ 20

Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort  
Erlkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort? —  
Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh' es genau;  
Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau. —

„Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt; 25  
„Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch' ich Gewalt.“ —  
Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt fasst er mich an!  
Erlkönig hat mir ein Leids getan! —

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind,  
Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind, 30  
Erreicht den Hof mit Mühe und Not;  
In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.

## 37. Der Sänger (1783?).

Was hör' ich draußen vor dem Tor,  
 Was auf der Brücke schallen?  
 Läßt den Gesang vor unserm Ohr  
 Im Saale widerhallen!

5      Der König sprach's, der Page lief;  
       Der Knabe kam, der König rief:  
       Läßt mir herein den Alten!

Gegrüßet seid mir, edle Herrn,  
 Gegrüßt ihr, schöne Damen!  
 10     Welch reicher Himmel! Stern bei Stern!  
       Wer kennet ihre Namen?  
       Im Saal voll Pracht und Herrlichkeit  
       Schließt, Augen, euch; hier ist nicht Zeit,  
       Sich staunend zu ergehen.

15     Der Sänger drückt' die Augen ein  
       Und schlug in vollen Lönen;  
       Die Ritter schauten mutig drein  
       Und in den Schoß die Schönen.  
       Der König, dem das Lied gefiel,  
 20     Ließ, ihn zu ehren für sein Spiel,  
       Eine goldne Kette holen.

Die goldne Kette gib mir nicht,  
 Die Kette gib den Rittern,  
 Vor deren kühnem Angesicht  
 25     Der Feinde Lanzen splittern;  
       Gib sie dem Kanzler, den du hast,  
       Und laß ihn noch die goldne Last  
       Zu andern Lasten tragen.

Ich singe, wie der Vogel singt,  
Der in den Zweigen wohnet; 30  
Das Lied, das aus der Höhle dringt,  
Ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet.  
Doch darf ich bitten, bitt' ich eins:  
Lasst mir den besten Becher Weins  
In purem Golde reichen. 35

Er setzt ihn an, er trank ihn aus:  
O Trank voll füher Labe!  
O wohl dem hochbeglückten Hause,  
Wo das ist kleine Gabe!  
Ergeht's euch wohl, so denkt an mich, 40  
Und danket Gott so warm, als ich  
Für diesen Trunk euch danke.

### 38. Der Rattenfänger (1784—1791?).

Ich bin der wohlbekannte Sänger,  
Der vielgereiste Rattenfänger,  
Den diese altherühmte Stadt  
Gewiß besonders nötig hat.  
Und wären's Ratten noch so viele, 5  
Und wären Wiesel mit im Spiele;  
Von allen säub'r ich diesen Ort,  
Sie müssen miteinander fort.

Dann ist der gutgelaunte Sänger  
Mitunter auch ein Kindersänger,  
Der selbst die wildesten bezwingt,  
Wenn er die goldenen Märchen singt.  
Und wären Knaben noch so trüzig, 10  
Und wären Mädchen noch so stutzig,

15      In meine Saiten greif' ich ein,  
Sie müssen alle hinterdrein.

Dann ist der vielgewandte Sänger  
Gelegentlich ein Mädelchenfänger;  
In keinem Städtchen langt er an,  
Wo er's nicht mancher angetan.  
20      Und wären Mädelchen noch so blöde,  
Und wären Weiber noch so spröde;  
Doch allen wird so liebevang  
Bei Zauberseiten und Gesang.

(Von Anfang.)

### 39. Der Schatzgräber (1797).

5      Arm am Beutel, krank am Herzen  
Schleppt' ich meine langen Tage.  
Armut ist die größte Plage,  
Reichtum ist das höchste Gut!  
Und zu enden meine Schmerzen,  
Ging ich einen Schatz zu graben.  
Meine Seele sollst du haben!  
Schrieb ich hin mit eignem Blut.

10      Und so zog ich Kreis' um Kreise,  
Stellte wunderbare Flammen,  
Kraut und Knochenwerk zusammen:  
Die Beschwörung war vollbracht.  
Und auf die gelernte Weise  
Grub ich nach dem alten Schatz  
15      Auf dem angezeigten Platze:  
Schwarz und stürmisch war die Nacht.

Und ich sah ein Licht von weiten,  
 Und es kam gleich einem Sterne  
 Hinten aus der fernsten Ferne,  
 Eben als es zwölfe schlug. 20  
 Und da galt kein Vorbereiten.  
 Heller ward's mit einem Male  
 Von dem Glanz der vollen Schale,  
 Die ein schöner Knabe trug.

Holde Augen sah ich blinken 25  
 Unter dichtem Blumenkranze;  
 In des Erankes Himmelsglanze  
 Trat er in den Kreis herein.  
 Und er hieß mich freundlich trinken;  
 Und ich dacht': es kann der Knabe  
 Mit der schönen lichten Gabe  
 Wahrlich nicht der Böse sein. 30

Trinke Mut des reinen Lebens!  
 Dann verstehst du die Belehrung,  
 Kommst, mit ängstlicher Beschwörung,  
 Nicht zurück an diesen Ort. 35  
 Grabe hier nicht mehr vergebens.  
 Tages Arbeit! Abends Gäste!  
 Saure Wochen! Frohe Feste!  
 Sei dein künftig Zauberwort. 40

#### 40. Bauberlehrling (1797).

Hat der alte Hexenmeister  
 Sich doch einmal wegbegeben!  
 Und nun sollen seine Geister  
 Auch nach meinem Willen leben.

5           Seine Wort' und Werke  
Merkt' ich, und den Brauch,  
Und mit Geistesstärke  
Eu' ich Wunder auch.

10          Walle! Walle  
Manche Strecke,  
Dah̄ zum Zwecke,  
Wasser fließe,  
Und mit reichem vollem Schwalle  
Zu dem Bade sich ergieße.

15          Und nun komm, du alter Besen!  
Nimm die schlechten Lumpenhüllen;  
Bist schon lange Knecht gewesen;  
Nun erfülle meinen Willen!  
Auf zwei Beinen stehe,

20          Oben sei ein Kopf,  
Eile nun und gehe  
Mit dem Wassertopf!

25          Walle! walle  
Manche Strecke,  
Dah̄ zum Zwecke,  
Wasser fließe,  
Und mit reichem vollem Schwalle  
Zu dem Bade sich ergieße.

30          Seht, er läuft zum Ufer nieder;  
Wahrlich! ist schon an dem Flusse,  
Und mit Blitzeßchnelle wieder  
Ist er hier mit raschem Gufse.  
Schon zum zweitenmale!

35          Wie das Becken schwilzt!  
Wie sich jede Schale  
Voll mit Wasser füllt!

Stehel stehel  
 Denn wir haben  
 Deiner Gaben  
 Vollgemessen! — 40  
 Ach, ich merk' es! Wehe! wehe!  
 Hab' ich doch das Wort vergessen!

Ach das Wort, worauf am Ende  
 Er das wird, was er gewesen.  
 Ach, er läuft und bringt behende! 45  
 Wärst du doch der alte Besen!  
 Immer neue Güsse  
 Bringt er schnell herein,  
 Ach! und hundert Flüsse  
 Stürzen auf mich ein. 50

Nein nicht länger  
 Kann ich's lassen;  
 Will ihn fassen.  
 Das ist Tückel  
 Ach! nun wird mir immer bänger! 55  
 Welche Mienel welche Blicke!

O, du Ausgeburt der Hölle!  
 Soll das ganze Haus ersaufen?  
 Seh' ich über jede Schwelle  
 Doch schon Wasserströme laufen. 60  
 Ein verruchter Besen,  
 Der nicht hören will!  
 Stöck, der du gewesen,  
 Steh doch wieder still!

Willst's am Ende  
 Gar nicht lassen?  
 Will dich fassen, 65

Will dich halten,  
Und das alte Holz behende  
Mit dem scharfen Beile spalten.  
70

Seht, da kommt er schleppend wieder!  
Wie ich mich nur auf dich werfe,  
Gleich, o Kobold, liegst du nieder;  
Krachend trifft die glatte Schärfe.  
Wahrlich! brav getroffen!  
75 Seht, er ist entzwei!  
Und nun kann ich hoffen,  
Und ich atme frei!

Wehe! wehe!  
80 Beide Teile  
Stehn in Eile  
Schon als Knechte  
Völlig fertig in die Höhe!  
Helft mir, ach! ihr hohen Mächte!

Und sie laufen! Naß und nässer  
Wird's im Saal und auf den Stufen.  
Welch entsetzliches Gewässer!  
Herr und Meister! hör' mich rufen! —  
Ach, da kommt der Meister!  
90 Herr, die Not ist groß!  
Die ich rief, die Geister,  
Wer'd ich nun nicht los.

„In die Ecke,  
Besen! Besen!  
Seid's gewesen.  
Denn als Geister  
Ruft euch nur, zu seinem Zweck,  
Erst hervor der alte Meister.“  
95

#### 41. Die wandelnde Glocke (1813?).

Es war ein Kind, das wollte nie  
Zur Kirche sich bequemen,  
Und Sonntags fand es stets ein Wie,  
Den Weg ins Feld zu nehmen.

Die Mutter sprach: Die Glocke tönt,  
Und so ist dir's befohlen;  
Und hast du dich nicht hingewöhnt,  
Sie kommt und wird dich holen.

Das Kind es denkt: die Glocke hängt  
Da droben auf dem Stuhle.  
Schon hat's den Weg ins Feld gelenkt,  
Als lief es aus der Schule.

Die Glocke Glocke tönt nicht mehr,  
Die Mutter hat gefackelt.  
Doch welch ein Schrecken hinterher!  
Die Glocke kommt gewackelt.

Sie wackelt schnell, man glaubt es kaum;  
Das arme Kind im Schreien  
Es lauft, es kommt, als wie im Traum;  
Die Glocke wird es decken.

Doch nimmt es richtig seinen Husch  
Und mit gewandter Schnelle  
Gilt es durch Anger, Feld und Busch  
Zur Kirche, zur Kapelle.

Und jeden Sonn- und Feiertag  
Gedenkt es an den Schaden,  
Läßt durch den ersten Glöckenschlag,  
Nicht in Person sich laden.

## 42. Der gefreue Eckart (1813).

O wären wir weiter, o wär' ich zu Hause!  
 Sie kommen. Da kommt schon der nächtliche Graus;  
 Sie sind's die unholdigen Schwestern.  
 Sie streifen heran und sie finden uns hier,  
 5 Sie trinken das mühsam geholte das Bier,  
 Und lassen nur leer uns die Krüge.

So sprechen die Kinder und drücken sich schnell;  
 Da zeigt sich vor ihnen ein alter Gesell:  
 Nur stille, Kind! Kinderlein, stille!  
 10 Die Hulden sie kommen von durstiger Jagd,  
 Und laßt ihr sie trinken wie's jeder behagt,  
 Dann sind sie euch hold die Unholden.

Gesagt so geschehn! und da naht sich der Graus  
 Und siehet so grau und so schattenhaft aus,  
 15 Doch schlürft es und schlampft es aufs beste.  
 Das Bier ist verschwunden, die Krüge sind leer,  
 Nun saust es und braust es, das wütige Heer,  
 Ins weite Getal und Gebirge.

Die Kinderlein ängstlich gen Hause so schnell,  
 20 Gesellt sich zu ihnen der fromme Gesell:  
 Ihr Büppchen, nur seid mir nicht traurig. —  
 Wir kriegen nun Schelten und Streich' bis aufs Blut.  
 Nein keineswegs, alles geht herrlich und gut,  
 Nur schweigt und horchet wie Mäuslein.

Und der es euch anräät und der es befiehlt,  
 Er ist es, der gern mit den Kindlein spielt,  
 Der alte Getreue, der Eckart.  
 Vom Wundermann hat man euch immer erzählt;  
 Nur hat die Bestätigung jedem gefehlt,  
 25 Die habt ihr nun köstlich in Händen.

Sie kommen nach Hause, sie setzen den Krug  
 Ein jedes den Eltern bescheiden genug  
 Und harren der Schläg' und der Schelten.  
 Doch siehe, man kostet: ein herrliches Bier!  
 Man trinkt in die Runde schon dreimal und vier  
 Und noch nimmt der Krug nicht ein Ende.

35

Das Wunder es dauert zum morgenden Tag.  
 Doch fraget wer immer zu fragen vermag:  
 Wie ist's mit den Krügen ergangen?  
 Die Mäuslein sie lächeln, im stillen ergeht;  
 Sie stammeln und stottern und schwanken zuletzt  
 Und gleich sind vertrocknet die Krüge.

40

Und wenn euch, ihr Kinder, mit treuem Gesicht  
 Ein Vater, ein Lehrer, ein alter Mann spricht,  
 So horchet und folget ihm pünktlich!  
 Und liegt auch das Bünglein in peinlicher Hut,  
 Verplaudern ist schädlich, verschweigen ist gut;  
 Dann füllt sich das Bier in den Krügen.

45

### 43. Ballade (1816).

Herein, o du Guter! du Alter herein!  
 Hier unten im Saale da sind wir allein,  
 Wir wollen die Pforte verschließen.  
 Die Mutter sie betet, der Vater im Hain  
 Ist gangen die Wölfe zu schießen.  
 O sing' uns ein Märchen, o sing' es uns oft,  
 Daz ich und der Bruder es lerne,  
 Wir haben schon längst einen Sänger gehofft,  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

5

10 Im nächtlichen Schredden, im feindlichen Graus  
 Verläßt er das hohe, das herrliche Haus,  
 Die Schätze die hat er vergraben.  
 Der Graf nun so eilig zum Pförtchen hinaus,  
 Was mag er im Arme denn haben?

15 Was birget er unter dem Mantel geschwind?  
 Was trägt er so rasch in die Ferne?  
 Ein Töchterlein ist es, da schläft nun das Kind. —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

Nun hellt sich der Morgen, die Welt ist so weit,

20 In Tälern und Wäldern die Wohnung bereit,  
 In Dörfern erquidet man den Sänger,  
 So schreitet und heischt er unendliche Zeit,  
 Der Vater wächst ihm länger und länger;  
 Doch wächst in dem Arme das liebliche Kind,

25 Wie unter dem glücklichsten Sterne,  
 Geschützt in dem Mantel vor Regen und Wind. —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

Und immer sind weiter die Jahre gerüdt,  
 Der Mantel entfärbt sich, der Mantel zerstüdt,

30 Er könnte sie länger nicht fassen.  
 Der Vater er schaut sie, wie ist er beglückt!  
 Er kann sich für Freude nicht lassen;  
 So schön und so edel erscheint sie zugleich,  
 Entsprungen aus tüchtigem Kerne,

35 Wie macht sie den Vater, den teuren, so reich! —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

Da reitet ein fürstlicher Ritter heran,  
 Sie reckt die Hand aus, der Gabe zu nahm,  
 Almosen will er nicht geben.

40 Er fasst das Händchen so kräftiglich an:  
 Die will ich, so ruft er, aufs Leben!

Erkennst du, erwidert der Alte, den Schatz,  
 Erhebst du zur Fürstin sie gerne;  
 Sie sei dir verlobet auf grünendem Platz! —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

45

Sie segnet der Priester am heiligen Ort,  
 Mit Lust und mit Unlust nun ziehet sie fort,  
 Sie möchte vom Vater nicht scheiden.  
 Der Alte er wandelt nun hier und bald dort,  
 Er trägt in Freuden sein Leiden.  
 So hab' ich mir Jahre die Tochter gedacht,  
 Die Enkelein wohl in der Ferne;  
 Sie segn' ich bei Tage, sie segn' ich bei Nacht —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

50

Er segnet die Kinder; da poltert's am Tor,  
 Der Vater da ist er! Sie springen hervor,  
 Sie können den Alten nicht bergen —  
 Was lockst du die Kinder? du Bettler, du Tor!  
 Ergreift ihn, ihr eisernen Schergen!  
 Zum tieffsten Verließ den Verwegenen fort!  
 Die Mutter vernimm's in der Ferne,  
 Sie eilet, sie bittet mit schmeichelndem Wort —  
 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

55

Die Schergen sie lassen den Würdigen stehn,  
 Und Mutter und Kinder sie bitten so schön;  
 Der fürstliche Stolze verbeißet  
 Die grimmige Wut, ihn entrüstet das Flehn,  
 Bis endlich sein Schweigen zerreißet:  
 Du niedrige Brut! du vom Bettlergeschlecht!  
 Verfinsterung fürstlicher Sternel  
 Ihr bringt mir Verderben! Geschieht mir doch recht! —  
 Die Kinder sie hören's nicht gerne.

60

65

70

Noch siehet der Alte mit herrlichem Blick,  
Die eisernen Scherzen sie treten zurück,  
75 Es wächst nur das Toben und Wüten.  
Schon lange verflucht' ich mein ehliches Glück,  
Das sind nun die Früchte der Blüten!  
Man leugnete stets, und man leugnet mit Recht,  
Dass je sich der Adel erlerne,  
80 Die Bettlerin zeugte mir Bettlergeschlecht. —  
Die Kinder sie hören's nicht gerne.

Und wenn euch der Gatte, der Vater verstößt,  
Die heiligsten Bande verwegenlich löst;  
So kommt zu dem Vater, dem Ahnen!  
85 Der Bettler vermag, so ergraut und entblößt,  
Euch herrliche Wege zu bahnen.  
Die Burg die ist meine! Du hast sie geraubt,  
Mich trieb dein Geschlecht in die Ferne;  
Wohl bin ich mit kostlichen Siegeln beglaubt! —  
90 Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.

Rechtmässiger König er lehret zurück,  
Den Treuen verleiht er entwendetes Glück,  
Ich löse die Siegel der Schätze.  
So rufet der Alte mit freundlichem Blick:  
95 Euch künd' ich die milden Gesetze.  
Erhole dich, Sohn! Es entwickelt sich gut,  
Heut einen sich selige Sterne,  
Die Fürstin sie zeugte dir fürstliches Blut! —  
Die Kinder sie hören es gerne.



V. ELEGIES.

44. (Rom) (1789?).

O wie fühl' ich in Rom mich so froh! gedenk' ich der Zeiten,  
 Da mich ein graulicher Tag hinten im Norden umsing,  
 Trübe der Himmel und schwer auf meine Scheitel sich senkte,  
 Farb- und gestaltlos die Welt um den Ermatteten lag,  
 Und ich über mein Ich, des unbeschiedigten Geistes      5  
 Düstre Wege zu spähn, still in Betrachtung versank.  
 Nun umleuchtet der Glanz des helleren Aethers die Stirne;  
 Phöbus rufet, der Gott, Formen und Farben hervor.  
 Sternhell glänzet die Nacht, sie klingt von weichen Gesängen,  
 Und mir leuchtet der Mond heller als nordischer Tag.      10  
 Welche Seligkeit ward mir Sterblichem! Träum' ich?  
 Empfänger!  
 Dein ambrosisches Haus, Jupiter Vater, den Gast?  
 Ach! hier lieg' ich und strecke nach deinen Knieen die Hände  
 Flehend aus. O vernimm, Jupiter Xentius, mich!  
 Wie ich hereingekommen, ich kann's nicht sagen; es fasste      15  
 Hebe den Wandrer, und zog mich in die Hallen heran.  
 Hast du einen Heroen herauf zu führen geboten?  
 Irrte die Schöne? Bergib! Laß mir des Irrtums  
 Gewinn!  
 Deine Tochter Fortuna, sie auch! Die herrlichsten Gaben  
 Teilt als ein Mädchen sie aus, wie es die Laune gebeut.      20  
 Bist du der wirtliche Gott? O dann so verstoße den  
 Gastfreund  
 Nicht von deinem Olymп wieder zur Erde hinab!  
 „Dichter! wohin versteigest du dich?“ — Bergib mir;  
 der hohe  
 Kapitolinische Berg ist dir ein zweiter Olymп.  
 Dulde mich, Jupiter, hier, und Hermes führe mich später,      25  
 Xentius Mal vorbei, leise zum Orcus hinab.

45. *Alexis und Dora (1796).*

Ach! unaufhaltsam strebet das Schiff mit jedem Momente  
 Durch die schäumende Flut weiter und weiter hinaus!  
 Langhin furcht sich die Geleise des Kiels, worin die  
 Delphine  
 Springend folgen, als flöh' ihnen die Beute davon.

5 Alles deutet auf glückliche Fahrt: der ruhige Bootsmann  
 Ruft am Segel gelind, das sich für alle bemüht;  
 Vorwärts bringt der Schiffenden Geist, wie Flaggen und  
 Wimpel;

Einer nur steht rückwärts traurig gewendet am Mast,  
 Sieht die Berge schon blau, die scheidenden, sieht in das  
 Meer sie

10 Niedersinken, es sinkt jegliche Freude vor ihm.  
 Auch dir ist es verschwunden, das Schiff, das deinen Alexis,  
 Dir, o Dora, den Freund, ach! dir den Bräutigam  
 raubt.

Auch du blickest vergebens nach mir. Noch schlagen die  
 Herzen  
 Für einander, doch, ach! nun an einander nicht mehr.

15 Einziger Augenblick, in welchem ich lebte! du wiegest  
 Alle Tage, die sonst kalt mir verschwinden, auf.  
 Ach! nur im Augenblick, im letzten, stieg mir ein Leben  
 Unvermutet in dir, wie von den Göttern, herab.

Nur umsonst verkärst du mit deinem Lichte den Äther;

20 Dein alleuchtender Tag, Phöbus, mir ist er verhaft.  
 In mich selber lehr' ich zurück; da will ich im stillen  
 Wiederholen die Zeit, als sie mir täglich erschien.  
 War es möglich, die Schönheit zu sehn und nicht zu  
 empfinden?

Wirkte der himmlische Reiz nicht auf dein stumpfes  
 Gemüt?

25 Plage dich, Armer, nicht an! — So legt der Dichter ein  
 Rätsel,

Rünstlich mit Worten verschrankt, oft der Versammlung  
ins Ohr.

Jeden freuet die seltne, der zierlichen Bilder Verknüpfung,

Aber noch fehlet das Wort, das die Bedeutung verwahrt.

Ist es endlich entdeckt, dann heitert sich jedes Gemüt auf,

Und erblickt im Gedicht doppelt erfreulichen Sinn. 30

Ach, warum so spät, o Amor, nahmst du die Binde,

Die du ums Aug' mir geknüpft, nahmst sie zu spät  
mir hinweg!

Lange schon harrte befrachtet das Schiff auf günstige Lüste;

Endlich strebte der Wind glücklich vom Ufer ins Meer.

Leere Zeiten der Jugend! und leere Träume der Zukunft! 35

Ihr verschwindet, es bleibt einzig die Stunde mir nur.

Ja, sie bleibt, es bleibt mir das Glück! ich halte dich,  
Dora!

Und die Hoffnung zeigt, Dora, dein Bild mir allein.

Ofter sah ich zum Tempel dich gehn, geschmückt und  
gesittet,

Und das Mütterchen ging feierlich neben dir her. 40

Eilig warst du und frisch, zu Markte die Früchte zu tragen;

Und vom Brunnen, wie kühn! wiegte dein Haupt  
das Gefäß.

Da erschien dein Hals, erschien dein Nacken vor allen,

Und vor allen erschien deiner Bewegungen Maß.

Oftmals hab ich gesorgt, es möchte der Krug dir ent- 45  
stürzen;

Doch er hielt sich stet auf dem geringelten Tuch.

Schöne Nachbarin, ja so war ich gewohnt dich zu sehen,

Wie man die Sterne sieht, wie man den Mond sich beschaut,

Sich an ihnen erfreut, und innen im ruhigen Busen

Nicht der entfernte Wunsch, sie zu besitzen, sich regt. 50

Jahre, so gingt ihr dahin! Nur zwanzig Schritte getrennet

Waren die Häuser, und nie hab' ich die Schwelle berührt.

Und nun trennt uns die gräßliche Flut! Du lügst nur  
den Himmel,

Welle! dein herrliches Blau ist mir die Farbe der Nacht.  
 55 Alles rührte sich schon; da kam ein Knabe gelaufen  
   An mein väterlich Haus, rief mich zum Strande hinab.  
   Schon erhebt sich das Segel, es flattert im Winde: so  
     sprach er;  
     Und gelichtet, mit Kraft, trennt sich der Anker vom Sand.  
   Komm, Alexis, o komm! Da drückte der wackere Vater,  
 60 Würdig, die segnende Hand mir auf das lockige Haupt;  
   Sorglich reichte die Mutter ein nachbereitetes Bündel:  
     Glücklich kehre zurück! riefen sie, glücklich und reich!  
   Und so sprang ich hinweg, das Bündelchen unter dem  
     Arme,  
     An der Mauer hinab, fand an der Türe dich stehn,  
 65 Deines Gartens. Du lächeltest mir und sagtest: Alexis!  
     Sind die Lärmenden dort deine Gesellen der Fahrt?  
   Fremde Küsten besuchest du nun, und kostliche Waren  
     Handelst du ein, und Schmuck reichen Matronen der Stadt.  
   Aber bringe mir auch ein leichtes Kettkchen; ich will es  
 70 Dankbar zahlen: so oft hab' ich die Erde gewünscht!  
   Stehen war ich geblieben, und fragte, nach Weise des  
     Kaufmanns,  
     Erst nach Form und Gewicht deiner Bestellung genau.  
   Gar bescheiden erwogst du den Preis! da blickt' ich indessen  
     Nach dem Halse, des Schmucks unserer Königin wert.  
 75 Heftiger tönte vom Schiff das Geschrei; da sagtest du  
     freundlich:  
     Nimm aus dem Garten noch einige Früchte mit dir!  
   Nimm die reifsten Orangen, die weißen Feigen; das  
     Meer bringt  
     Keine Früchte, sie bringt jegliches Land nicht hervor.  
   Und so trat ich herein. Du brachst nun die Früchte ge-  
     schäftig,  
 80 Und die goldene Last zog das geschränzte Gewand.  
   Öfters bat ich: es sei nun genug! und immer noch eine  
     Schönere Frucht fiel dir, leise berührt, in die Hand.

Endlich kamst du zur Laube hinan; da fand sich ein Körbchen,  
 Und die Myrte bog blühend sich über uns hin.  
 Schweigend begannest du nun geschickt die Früchte zu 85  
 ordnen:  
 Erst die Orange, die schwer ruht, als ein goldener Ball,  
 Dann die weichliche Feige, die jeder Druck schon entstellet;  
 Und mit Myrte bedeckt ward und geziert das Geschenk.  
 Aber ich hob es nicht auf; ich stand. Wir sahen einander  
 In die Augen, und mir ward vor dem Auge so trüb. 90  
 Deinen Busen fühl' ich an meinem! Den herrlichen  
 Macken,  
 Ihn umschlang nun mein Arm; tausendmal küßt' ich  
 den Hals;  
 Mir sank über die Schulter dein Haupt; nun knüpfsten  
 auch deine  
 Lieblichen Arme das Band um den Beglückten herum.  
 Amors Hände fühl' ich: er drückt' uns gewaltig zusammen, 95  
 Und aus heiterer Lust donnert' es dreimal; da floß  
 Häufig die Träne vom Aug' mir herab, du weinstest, ich  
 weinte,  
 Und vor Jammer und Glück schien die Welt zu vergehn.  
 Immer heftiger rief es am Strand; da wollten die Füße  
 Mich nicht tragen, ich rief: Dora! und bist du nicht mein? 100  
 Ewig! sagtest du leise. Da schienen unsere Tränen,  
 Wie durch göttliche Lust, leise vom Auge gehaucht.  
 Näher rief es: Alexis! Da blickte der suchende Knabe  
 Durch die Türe herein. Wie er das Körbchen empfing!  
 Wie er mich trieb! Wie ich dir die Hand noch drückte! 105  
 — Zu Schiffe  
 Wie ich gekommen? Ich weiß, daß ich ein Trunkener  
 schien.  
 Und so hielten mich auch die Gesellen, schonten den  
 Kranken;  
 Und schon deckte der Hauch trüber Entfernung die Stadt.

110 Ewig! Dora, lispestest du; mir schallt es im Ohre  
 Mit dem Donner des Zeus! Stand sie doch neben dem Thron,  
 Seine Tochter, die Göttin der Liebe; die Grazien standen  
 Ihr zur Seiten! Er ist götterbeträgt, der Bund!  
 O so eile denn, Schiff, mit allen günstigen Winden!  
 Strebe, mächtiger Kiel, trenne die schäumende Flut!

115 Bringe dem fremden Hafen mich zu, damit mir der  
 Goldschmied  
 In der Werkstatt gleich ordne das himmlische Pfand.  
 Wahrlich! zur Kette soll das Ketten werden, o Dora!  
 Neunmal umgebe sie dir, locker gewunden, den Hals!  
 Ferner schaff' ich noch Schmuck, den mannigfaltigsten;  
 goldne

120 Spangen sollen dir auch reichlich verzieren die Hand:  
 Da wettefreie Rubin und Smaragd, der liebliche Saphir  
 Stelle dem Hyacinth sich gegenüber, und Gold  
 Halte das Edelstein in schöner Verbindung zusammen.  
 O, wie den Bräutigam freut einzig zu schmücken die  
 Braut!

125 Geh' ich Perlen, so denk' ich an dich; bei jeglichem Ringe  
 Kommt mir der länglichen Hand schönes Gebild' in  
 Sinn.  
 Läufchen will ich und kaufen; du sollst das Schönste von  
 allem  
 Wählen; ich widmete gern alle die Ladung nur dir.  
 Doch nicht Schmuck und Juwelen allein verschafft dein  
 Geliebter:

130 Was ein häusliches Weib freuet, das bringt er dir auch.  
 Feine wollene Decken mit Purpursäumen, ein Lager  
 Zu bereiten, das uns traulich und weichlich empfängt;  
 Rößlicher Leinwand Stücke. Du sitzest und nähest und  
 Kleidest

135 Mich und dich und auch wohl noch ein Drittes darein.  
 Bilder der Hoffnung, täuschet mein Herz! O mäßiget,  
 Götter,

Diesen gewaltigen Brand, der mir den Busen durchtobt!  
 Aber auch sie verlang' ich zurück, die schmerzliche Freude,  
 Wenn die Sorge sich kalt, gräßlich gelassen, mir naht.  
 Nicht der Erinnhen Fackel, das Bellen der höllischen  
 Hunde

Schrekt den Verbrecher so, in der Verzweiflung Gefild, 140  
 Als das gelassne Gespenst mich schrekt, das die Schöne  
 von fern mir

Beiget: die Türe steht wirklich des Gartens noch auf!  
 Und ein anderer kommt! Für ihn auch fallen die Früchte!

Und die Feige gewährt stärkenden Honig auch ihm!  
 Locket sie auch ihn nach der Laube? und folgt er? O, macht 145  
 mich, ihr Götter,

Blind,- verwischet das Bild jeder Erinnerung in mir!  
 Ja, ein Mädchen ist sie! und die sich geschwinde dem einen

Gibt, sie kehret sich auch schnell zu dem andern herum.  
 Lache nicht diesmal, Zeus, der frech gebrochenen Schwüre!

Donnere schrecklicher! Triff! — Halte die Blitze zurück!  
 Sende die schwankenden Wolken mir nach! Im nächtlichen  
 Dunkel

Treffe dein leuchtender Blitz diesen unglücklichen Mast!  
 Streue die Planken umher, und gib der tobenden Welle

Diese Waren, und mich gib den Delphinen zum Raub! —  
 Nun, ihr Mäusen, genug! Vergebens strebt ihr zu schildern,

Wie sich Jammer und Glück wechseln in liebender Brust.  
 Heilen könnet die Wunden ihr nicht, die Amor geschlagen;  
 Aber Linderung kommt einzlig, ihr Guten, von euch.

#### 46. Hermann und Dorothea (1797).

Also das wäre Verbrechen, daß einst Properz mich be-  
 geistert,

Daß Martial sich zu mir auch, der verwegne, gesellt?

Daß ich die Alten nicht hinter mir ließ, die Schule zu hüten,  
 Daß sie nach Latium gern mir in das Leben gefolgt?

5 Daß ich Natur und Kunst zu schaun mich treulich bestrebe,  
 Daß kein Name mich täuscht, daß mich kein Dogma  
 beschränkt?

Daß nicht des Lebens bedingender Drang mich, den Menschen,  
 verändert,  
 Daß ich der Heuchelei dürftige Maske verschmäht?

Solcher Fehler, die du, o Muse, so eifrig gepfleget,

10 Heihet der Böbel mich; Böbel nur sieht er in mir.  
 Ja, sogar der Bessere selbst, gutmütig und bieder,  
 Will mich anders; doch du, Muse, befiehlst mir allein.  
 Denn du bist es allein, die noch mir die innere Jugend  
 Frisch erneuest, und sie mir bis zu Ende versprichst.

15 Aber verdopple nunmehr, o Göttin, die heilige Sorgfalt!  
 Ach! die Scheitel umwallt reichlich die Locke nicht mehr:  
 Da bedarf man der Kränze, sich selbst und andre zu  
 täuschen;  
 Kränzte doch Cäsar selbst nur aus Bedürfnis das Haupt.  
 Hast du ein Lorbeerreis mir bestimmt, so laß es am  
 Zweige

20 Weiter grünen, und gib einst es dem Würdigern hin;  
 Aber Rosen winde genug zum häuslichen Kränze;  
 Bald als Lilie schlingt silberne Locke sich durch.  
 Schüre die Gattin das Feuer, auf reinlichem Herde zu  
 kochen!

Werfe der Knabe das Reis, spielend, geschäftig dazu!

25 Laß im Becher nicht fehlen den Wein! Gesprächige  
 Freunde,  
 Gleichgesinnte, herein! Kränze, sie warten auf euch.  
 Erst die Gesundheit des Mannes, der, endlich vom Namen  
 Homeross

Kühn uns befreidend, uns auch ruft in die vollere Bahn.  
 Denn wer wagte mit Göttern den Kampf? und wer mit  
 dem Einen?

Doch Homeride zu sein, auch nur als letzter, ist schön. 80  
 Darum höret das neuste Gedicht! Noch einmal getrunken!  
 Euch besteche der Wein, Freundschaft und Liebe das Ohr.  
 Deutschen selber führ' ich euch zu, in die stillere Wohnung,  
 Wo sich, nah der Natur, menschlich der Mensch noch  
 erzieht.  
 Uns begleite des Dichters Geist, der seine Lüise 35  
 Nach dem würdigen Freund, uns zu entzücken, verband.  
 Auch die traurigen Bilder der Zeit, sie führ' ich vorüber;  
 Aber es siege der Mut in dem gesunden Geschlecht.  
 Hab' ich euch Tränen ins Auge gelockt, und Lust in die  
 Seele  
 Singend geflößt, so kommt, drücket mich herzlich ans Herz! 40  
 Weise dann sei das Gespräch! Uns lehret Weisheit am  
 Ende  
 Das Jahrhundert; wen hat das Geschick nicht geprüft?  
 Blickt heiterer nun auf jene Schmerzen zurück,  
 Wenn euch ein fröhlicher Sinn manches entbehrlich erklärt.  
 Menschen lernten wir kennen und Nationen; so lasst uns, 45  
 Unser eigenes Herz kennend, uns dessen erfreun.

#### 47. Euphrosyne (1798).

Auch von des höchsten Gebirgs beeif'ten zackigen Gipfeln  
 Schwindet Purpur und Glanz scheiden der Sonne hinweg.  
 Lange verhüllt schon Nacht das Tal und die Pfade des  
 Wandlers,  
 Der, am tosenden Strom, auf zu der Hütte sich sehnt,  
 Zu dem Ziele des Tags, der stillen hirlichen Wohnung; 5  
 Und der göttliche Schlaf eilet gefällig voraus,  
 Dieser holde Geselle des Reisenden. Daß er auch heute,  
 Segnend, kränze das Haupt mir mit dem heiligen Mohn!  
 Aber was leuchtet mir dort vom Felsen glänzend herüber,

10 Und erhellet den Duft schäumender Ströme so hold?  
 Strahlt die Sonne vielleicht durch heimliche Spalten  
 und Klüste?  
 Denn kein irdischer Glanz ist es, der wandelnde, dort.  
 Näher wälzt sich die Wolke, sie glüht. Ich staune dem  
 Wunder!

15 Wird der rosige Strahl nicht ein bewegtes Gebild?  
 Welche Göttin nahet sich mir? und welche der Musen  
 Suchet den treuen Freund, selbst in dem grausen Geißelt?  
 Schöne Göttin! enthülle dich mir, und täusche, ver-  
 schwindend,  
 Nicht den begeisterten Sinn, nicht das gerührte Gemüt.  
 Nenne, wenn du es darfst vor einem Sterblichen, deinen  
 20 Göttlichen Namen; wo nicht: rege bedeutend mich auf,  
 Daß ich fühle, welche du seist von den ewigen Töchtern  
 Deus', und der Dichter sogleich preise dich würdig im Lied.  
 „Kennst du mich, Guter, nicht mehr? und läme diese  
 Gestalt dir,

Die du doch sonst geliebt, schon als ein fremdes Gebild?  
 25 Bwar der Erde gehör' ich nicht mehr, und trauernd  
 entschwang sich  
 Schon der schaudernde Geist jugendlich frohem Genüß;  
 Aber ich hoffte mein Bild noch fest in des Freundes  
 Erinnerung  
 Eingeschrieben, und noch schön durch die Liebe verklärt.  
 Ja, schon sagt mir gerührt dein Blick, mir sagt es die Träne:  
 30 Euphrosyne, sie ist noch von dem Freunde gekannt.  
 Sieh, die Scheidende zieht durch Wald und grauses  
 Gebirge,  
 Sucht den wandernden Mann, ach! in der Ferne noch auf;  
 Sucht den Lehrer, den Freund, den Vater, blicket noch  
 einmal  
 Nach dem leichten Gerüst irdischer Freuden zurück.  
 35 Laß mich der Tage gedenken, da mich, das Kind, du  
 dem Spiele

Zener täuschenden Kunst reizender Musen geweiht.  
Läß mich der Stunde gedenken, und jedes kleineren  
Umstands.

Ach, wer ruft nicht so gern Unwiederbringliches an!  
Jenes süße Gedränge der leichtesten irdischen Tage,

Ach, wer schägt ihn genug, diesen vereilenden Wert! 40  
Klein erscheinet es nun, doch, ach! nicht kleinlich dem  
Herzen;

Macht die Liebe, die Kunst jegliches Kleine doch groß.  
Denkt du der Stunde noch wohl, wie auf dem Bretter-  
gerüste

Du mich der höheren Kunst ernstere Stufen geführt?  
Knabe schien ich, ein rührendes Kind, du nanntest mich 45  
Arthur

Und belebtest in mir britisches Dichtergebild,  
Drohdest mit grimmiger Glut den armen Augen, und  
wandtest

Selbst den tränenden Blick, innig getäuschet, hinweg.  
Ach! da warst du so hold und schüttest ein trauriges  
Leben,

Das die verwegene Flucht endlich dem Knaben entriss. 50  
Freundlich fasstest du mich, den Berschmetterten, trugst  
mich von dannen,

Und ich heuchelte lang, dir an dem Busen, den Tod.  
Endlich schlug die Augen ich auf, und sah dich, in ernste,  
Stille Betrachtung versenkt, über den Liebling geneigt.  
Kindlich strebt' ich empor, und küßte die Hände dir dankbar, 55

Reichte zum reinen Kuß dir den gefälligen Mund.  
Frage: warum, mein Vater, so ernst? und hab' ich  
gefehlet,

O! so zeige mir an, wie mir das Bess're gelingt.  
Keine Mühe verdrießt mich bei dir, und alles und jedes  
Wiederhol' ich so gern, wenn du mich leitest und lehrst. 60  
Aber du fasstest mich stark und drücktest mich fester im  
Arme,

Und es schauderte mir tief in dem Busen das Herz.  
 Rein! mein liebliches Kind, so rießt du, alles und jedes,  
 Wie du es heute gezeigt, zeig' es auch morgen der Stadt.  
 65 Röhre sie alle, wie mich du gerührt, und es fließen  
 zum Beifall

Dir von dem trockensten Aug' herrliche Tränen herab.  
 Aber am tiefsten traffst du doch mich, den Freund, der  
 im Arm dich  
 hält, den selber der Schein früherer Leiche geschreddert.  
 Ach, Natur, wie sicher und groß in allem erscheinst du!  
 70 Himmel und Erde befolgt ewiges, festes Gesetz,  
 Jahre folgen auf Jahre, dem Frühlinge reichtet der  
 Sommer,

Und dem reichlichen Herbst traulich der Winter die Hand.  
 Felsen stehen gegründet, es stürzt sich das ewige Wasser,  
 Aus der bewölkten Kluft, schäumend und brausend hinab.  
 75 Fichten grünen so fort, und selbst die entlaubten Gebüsche  
 Hegen, im Winter schon, heimliche Knospen am Zweig.  
 Alles entsteht und vergeht nach Gesetz; doch über des  
 Menschen

Leben, dem kostlichen Schatz, herrscht ein schwankendes  
 Los.

Nicht dem blühenden nicht der willig scheidende Vater,  
 80 Seinem trefflichen Sohn, freundlich vom Stande der Gruft;  
 Nicht der Jüngere schließt dem Älteren immer das Auge,  
 Das sich willig gesenkt, kräftig dem Schwächeren zu.  
 Öfter, ach! verlebt das Geschick die Ordnung der Tage;  
 Hülflos klaget ein Greis Kinder und Enkel umsonst,  
 85 Steht ein beschädigter Stamm, dem rings zerschmetterte  
 Zweige

Um die Seiten umher strömende Schlossen gestreckt.  
 Und so, liebliches Kind, durchdrang mich die tiefe Be-  
 trachtung,  
 Als du zur Leiche verstellt über die Arme mir hingst;  
 Aber freudig seh' ich dich mir, in dem Glanze der Jugend,

Belgeliebtes Geschöpf, wieder am Herzen belebt. 90  
 Springe fröhlich dahin, verstellter Knabe! Das Mädchen  
     Wächst zur Freude der Welt, mir zum Entzücken heran.  
 Immer strebe so fort, und deine natürlichen Gaben  
     Bilde, bei jeglichem Schritt steigenden Lebens, die Kunst.  
 Sei mir lange zur Lust, und eh' mein Auge sich schließet,  
     Wünsch' ich dein schönes Talent glücklich vollendet zu  
         sehn. —  
 Also sprachst du, und nie vergaß ich der wichtigen  
     Stunde!  
     Deutend entwickelt' ich mich an dem erhabenen Wort.  
 O wie sprach ich so gerne zum Volk die rührenden  
     Reden,  
     Die du, voller Gehalt, kindlichen Lippen vertraut! 100  
 O wie bildet' ich mich an deinen Augen, und suchte  
     Dich im tiefen Gedräng' staunender Hörer heraus!  
 Doch dort wirst du nun sein, und stehn, und nimmer  
     bewegt sich  
     Euphrosyne hervor, dir zu erheitern den Blick.  
 Du vernimmst sie nicht mehr, die Töne des wachsenden 105  
     Böglings,  
     Die du zu lieben dem Schmerz frühe, so frühe! gestimmt.  
 Andere kommen und gehn; es werden dir andre gefallen;  
     Selbst dem großen Talent drängt sich ein größeres nach.  
 Aber du, vergesse mich nicht! Wenn eine dir jemals  
     Sich im verwornten Geschäft heiter entgegen bewegt,  
 Deinem Winke sich fügt, an deinem Lächeln sich freuet,  
     Und am Platze sich nur, den du bestimmtest, gefällt;  
 Wenn sie Mühe nicht spart noch Fleiß, wenn tätig der  
     Kräfte,  
     Selbst bis zur Pforte des Grabs, freudiges Opfer sie  
         bringt;  
 Guter! dann gedenkest du mein, und rufest auch spät 115  
         noch:  
     Euphrosyne, sie ist wieder erstanden vor mir!

Vieles sagt' ich noch gern; doch ach! die Scheidende  
weilt nicht,

Wie sie wollte; mich führt streng ein gebietender Gott.  
Lebe wohl! schon zieht mich's dahin in schwankendem  
Eilen.

120 Einen Wunsch nur vernimm, freundlich gewähre mir ihn:  
Lasz nicht ungerühmt mich zu den Schatten hinabgehn!

Nur die Muse gewährt einiges Leben dem Tod.

Denn gestaltlos schweben umher in Persephoneia's  
Reiche, massenweis', Schatten vom Namen getrennt;

125 Wen der Dichter aber gerühmt, der wandelt, gestaltet,  
Einzeln, gesellet dem Chor aller Herven sich zu.

Freudig tret' ich einher, von deinem Liede verkündet,  
Und der Göttin Blick weilet gefällig auf mir.

Mild empfängt sie mich dann, und nennt mich; es winken  
die hohen,

130 Göttlichen Frauen mich an, immer die nächsten am Thron.  
Penelopeia redet zu mir, die treuste der Weiber,

Auch Euadne, gelehnt auf den geliebten Gemahl.

Jüngere nahen sich dann, zu früh herunter gesandte,  
Und beschlagen mit mir unser gemeinses Geschick.

135 Wenn Antigone kommt, die schwesterlichste der Seelen,  
Und Polyxena, trüb noch von dem bräutlichen Tod,

Seh' ich als Schwestern sie an und trete würdig zu ihnen;  
Denn der tragischen Kunst holde Geschöpfe sind sie.

Bildete doch ein Dichter auch mich, und seine Gesänge,

140 Ja, sie vollenden an mir, was mir das Leben versagt.“  
Also sprach sie, und noch bewegte der liebliche Mund sich,

Weiter zu reden; allein schwirrend versagte der Ton.  
Denn aus dem Purpurgewöll, dem schwebenden, immer  
bewegten,

Trat der herrliche Gott Hermes gelassen hervor,

145 Mild erhob er den Stab und deutete; wallend verschlangen  
Wachsende Wolken, im Zug, beide Gestalten vor mir.  
Tiefer liegt die Nacht um mich her; die stürzenden Wasser

Brausen gewaltiger nun neben dem schlüpfrigen Pfad.  
 Unbezwingliche Trauer befällt mich, entkräftender Jammer,  
 Und ein moosiger Fels stützt den Sinkenden nur. 150  
 Wehmut reicht durch die Saiten der Brust; die nächtlichen  
 Tränen  
 Fließen, und über dem Wald kündet der Morgen sich an.



~~ VI. SONNETS. ~~



48. Das Sonett (1800?).

Sich in erneutem Kunstgebrauch zu üben,  
 Ist heil'ge Pflicht, die wir dir auferlegen:  
 Du kannst dich auch, wie wir, bestimmt bewegen  
 Nach Tritt und Schritt, wie es dir vorgeschrieben.

Denn eben die Beschränkung lässt sich lieben,  
 Wenn sich die Geister gar gewaltig regen;  
 Und wie sie sich denn auch gebärden mögen,  
 Das Werk zuletzt ist doch vollendet blieben. 5

So möchte ich selbst in künstlichen Sonetten,  
 In sprachgewandter Muße kühnem Stolze,  
 Das Beste, was Gefühl mir gäbe, reimen; 10

Nur weiß ich hier mich nicht bequem zu betten,  
 Ich schneide sonst so gern aus ganzem Holze,  
 Und müßte nun doch auch mitunter leimen.

49. Natur und Kunst (1802).

Natur und Kunst, sie scheinen sich zu fliehen,  
 Und haben sich, eh' man es denkt, gefunden;  
 Der Widerwille ist auch mir verschwunden,  
 Und beide scheinen gleich mich anzuziehen.

5 Es gilt wohl nur ein redliches Bemühen!  
 Und wenn wir erst in abgemess'n Stunden  
 Mit Geist und Fleiß uns an die Kunst gebunden,  
 Mag frei Natur im Herzen wieder glühen.

So ist's mit aller Bildung auch beschaffen:  
 10 Vergebens werden ungebundne Geister  
 Nach der Vollendung reiner Höhe streben.

Wer Großes will, muß sich zusammenraffen;  
 — In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister,  
Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.

50. Sie kann nicht enden (1807?).

Wenn ich nun gleich das weiße Blatt dir schicke,  
 Anstatt daß ich's mit Lettern erst beschreibe,  
 Ausfülltest du's vielleicht zum Heitvertreibe  
 Und sendest's an mich, die Hochbeglückte.

5 Wenn ich den blauen Umschlag dann erblicke;  
 Neugierig schnell, wie es geziemt dem Weibe,  
 Riß' ich ihn auf, daß nichts verborgen bleibe;  
 Da leß' ich was mich mündlich sonst entzückte:

Lieb Kind! Mein artig Herz! Mein einzig Wesen! 10  
 Wie du so freundlich meine Sehnsucht stilltest  
 Mit süßem Wort und mich so ganz verwöhntest.

Sogar dein Lispeln glaubt' ich auch zu lesen,  
 Womit du liebend meine Seele fülltest  
 Und mich auf ewig vor mir selbst verschöntest. 15

### 51. Charade (1807).

Zwei Worte sind es, kurz, bequem zu sagen,  
 Die wir so oft mit holder Freude nennen,  
 Doch keineswegs die Dinge deutlich kennen,  
 Wovon sie eigentlich den Stempel tragen.

Es tut gar wohl in jung- und alten Tagen, 5  
 Eins an dem andern ledlich zu verbrennen;  
 Und kann man sich vereint zusammen nennen,  
 So drückt man aus ein seliges Behagen.

Nun aber such' ich ihnen zu gefallen  
 Und bitte, mit sich selbst mich zu beglücken; 10  
 Ich hoffe still, doch hoff ich's zu erlangen:

Als Namen der Geliebten sie zu lallen,  
 In Einem Bild sie beide zu erblicken,  
 In Einem Wesen beide zu umfangen.



## VII. WESTÖSTLICHER DIVAN.



### 52. H̄egire (1814).

Nord und West und Süd zerplittern,  
 Throne bersten, Reiche zittern,  
 Flüchte du, im reinen Osten  
 Patriarchenluft zu kosten,  
 Unter Lieben, Trinken, Singen  
 5 Soll dich Chisers Quell verjüngen.

Dort im Neinen und im Nechten  
 Will ich menschlichen Geschlechten  
 In des Ursprungs Tiefe dringen,  
 Wo sie noch von Gott empfingen  
 Himmelslehr' in Erdesprachen,  
 10 Und sich nicht den Köpf zerbrachen.

Wo sich Väter hoch verehrten,  
 Jeden fremden Dienst verwehrten;  
 Will mich freun der Jugend schranken:  
 Glaube weit, eng der Gedanke,  
 Wie das Wort so wichtig dort war,  
 15 Weil es ein gesprochen Wort war.

Will mich unter Hirten mischen,  
 An Däsen mich erfrischen,  
 Wenn mit Karawanen wandle,  
 Shawl, Kaffee und Moschus handle:  
 Jeden Pfad will ich betrreten  
 20 Von der Wüste zu den Städten.

Bösen Felsweg auf und nieder  
 Tröstet, Hafis, deine Lieder,  
 Wenn der Führer mit Entzücken  
 Von des Maultiers hohem Rücken  
 Singt, die Sterne zu erweden  
 Und die Räuber zu erschrecken.

25

Will in Bädern und in Schenken,  
 Heil'ger Hafis, dein gedenken;  
 Wenn den Schleier Liebchen lüstet,  
 Schüttelnd Ambraloden düstet.  
 Ja des Dichters Liebesflüster  
 Mache selbst die Huris lüstern.

85

Wolltet ihr ihm dies beneiden,  
 Oder etwa gar verleiden;  
 Wisset nur, daß Dichterworte  
 Um des Paradieses Pforte  
 Immer leise Klopfend schweben  
 Sich erbittend ew'ges Leben.

40

## 53.

Da du nun Suleika heißtest,  
 Soll' ich auch benamset sein.  
 Wenn du deinen Geliebten preisest,  
 Hatem! das soll der Name sein.  
 Nur daß man mich daran erkennet,  
 Keine Anmaßung soll es sein:  
 Wer sich St. Georgenritter nennet  
 Denkt nicht gleich Sankt Georg zu sein.  
 Nicht Hatem Thai, nicht der alles Gebende  
 Kann ich in meiner Armut sein;

5

10

Hatem Bograi nicht, der reichlichst Lebende  
 Von allen Dichtern, möcht' ich sein.  
 Über beide doch im Auge zu haben  
 Es wird nicht ganz verwerflich sein:  
 15 Zu nehmen, zu geben des Glückes Gaben  
 Wird immer ein groß Vergnügen sein.  
 Sich liebend aneinander zu laben  
 Wird Paradieses Wonne sein.

## 54. (1815).

An vollen Büschelzweigen,  
 Geliebte, sieh nur hin!  
 Laß dir die Früchte zeigen  
 Umschlalet stachlig grün.

5 Sie hängen längst gebalset,  
 Still, unbekannt mit sich,  
 Ein Ast der schaukelnd wallet  
 Wiegt sich geduldiglich.

10 Doch immer reift von innen  
 Und schwilkt der braune Kern,  
 Er möchte Lust gewinnen  
 Und säh' die Sonne gern.

15 Die Schale platzt und nieder  
 Macht er sich freudig los;  
 So fallen meine Lieder  
 Gehäuft in deinen Schoß.

## 55. (1815?).

Nicht mehr auf Seidenblatt  
 Schreib' ich symmetrische Reime;

Nicht mehr fass' ich sie  
In goldne Ranken;  
Dem Staub, dem beweglichen, eingezeichnet  
Überweht sie der Wind, aber die Kraft besteht,  
Bis zum Mittelpunkt der Erde  
Dem Boden angebannt. 5  
Und der Wandrer wird kommen,  
Der Liebende. Betritt er  
Diese Stelle, ihm zukt's  
Durch alle Glieder.  
„Hier! vor mir liebte der Liebende.  
War es Medschun der zarte?  
Ferhad der kräftige? Dschemil der dauernde?  
Oder von jenen tausend  
Glücklich-Unglücklichen einer?  
Er liebte! Ich liebe wie er,  
Ich ahnd' ihn!“  
Suleika, du aber ruhest  
Auf dem zarten Polster,  
Das ich dir bereitet und geschnüdt.  
Auch dir zukt's aufweckend durch die Glieder.  
„Er ist der mich ruft Hatem.  
Auch ich rufe dir, o! Hatem! Hatem!“ 20  
25

## 56. (?).

Lässt mich weinen! umschränkt von Nacht,  
In unendlicher Wüste.  
Kamele ruhn, die Treiber desgleichen,  
Rechnend still wacht der Armenier;  
Ich aber, neben ihm, berechne die Meilen  
Die mich von Suleika trennen, wiederhole  
Die wegverlängernden ärgerlichen Krümmungen. 5

Laßt mich weinen! das ist keine Schande.  
Weinende Männer sind gut.  
10 Weinte doch Achill um seine Briseis!  
Xerxes beweinie das unerschlagene Heer,  
Über den selbstgemordeten Liebling  
Alexander weinte.  
Laßt mich weinen! Tränen beleben den Staub.  
15 Schon grunelt's.



## NOTES.

The following is a list of the Editions of Goethe's Works which appeared during his lifetime and also of the principal Editions of the Poems. For the benefit of those who wish to obtain a closer acquaintance with the story of his Life, without which a full comprehension of his poems is impossible, a list of the principal Biographies in English and German is also given.

### A. COMPLETE WORKS.

The following are the authorised editions which appeared during Goethe's lifetime under his direction.  
Schriften. Leipzig, Göschen. 1787—1790. 8 volumes.  
Neue Schriften. Berlin, Unger. 1792—1800. 7 volumes.  
Werke. Tübingen, Cotta. 1806—1810. 13 volumes.  
Werke. Stuttgart und Tübingen, Cotta. 1815—1819.  
20 volumes.

Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe letzter Hand.

Stuttgart und Tübingen, Cotta. 1827—1830.  
40 volumes. In the preparation of this edition  
Goethe was assisted by Eckermann & Riemer,  
who in 1832—1842 published, as his literary  
executors, the *Nachgelassene Werke* in 20 volumes,  
thus making the whole edition up to 60 volumes.

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The Hempel Edition was published at Berlin,  
1868 et seq., and contains the complete Works in  
36 volumes.

The Standard Edition is now the Weimar edition:  
— Goethe's Werke. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen. Weimar, 1887 ff.

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### B. POEMS.

The following are the principal editions of the poems:

Goethes Gedichte, erläutert von Heinrich Viehoff.  
Stuttgart, \*1869. 2 Bde.

Goethes lyrische Gedichte, erläutert von Heinrich Düntzer. Leipzig, \*1896 ff. 3 Bde.

Goethes Gedichte. Mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen von Gustav von Loepel. Berlin, Hempel 1882—  
1884. 3 Teile.

Goethes Gedichte. Herausgegeben und mit Anmerkungen begleitet von Fr. Strehlke. Berlin, 1886 ff.  
3 Teile.

See also Düntzer, Erläuterungen zu den Deutschen Klassikern, 64—76.

### C. BIOGRAPHIES.

G. H. Lewes. Life and Works of Goethe, \*1875.

J. W. Schaefer. Goethes Leben, \*1877. 2 Bde.

H. Düntzer. Goethes Leben, \*1883. Translated from  
the German, 1883.

H. Grimm. Goethe, \*1894.

R. M. Meyer. Goethe, 1895 (In the Geisteshelden Series)

K. Heinemann. Goethes Leben und Werke. \*1899.

A. Bielschowsky. Goethe. Sein Leben und seine Werke. Bd. I. 1896.

### 1. *Betrügung.*

This poem was originally intended as an introduction to the *Geheimnisse*, a great religious and humanistic epic in the spirit of Herder, which however remained a fragment. It was first published as an introduction to Goethe's works in *Schriften* (1787); in the edition of 1806 it was once more placed as an introduction to the fragment of the *Geheimnisse*; in the 1815 edition it again preceded the poems. This position of general dedication to the collected poems it has since maintained, and as such it must be judged — in the light of a declaration of Goethe's conception of the relation of poetry to life. The *Geheimnisse* was begun in 1784, and the present poem written in great part on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1784 at Dingelstedt, where Goethe had been detained by an accident to the carriage, when on the way to the Harz. It is a kind of review of his past poetic career, tracing his progress through the misty half-truths of the *Storm and Stress* period, from which he had emerged, and his emancipation from which he had lately declared in the poem *Ilmenau* (1782) (No. 28). In those days many friends shared his errors and illusions; now in his present conception of poetic truth, or truthful poetry, as it might possibly be more properly expressed, he finds himself almost alone, or understood only by very few friends, such as Herder and Frau von Stein, the *Euch* of the poem. The figure or apparition is a personification of Poetic Truth, of Truth as attained through Poetry, and the poem describes how Goethe had proceeded on the poetic path in quest of truth, often straying, but gradually approaching nearer his goal.

It is characteristic of him, for whom all his poems were occasional poems and fragments of life, who sought all his poetry in the actualities of life, that he here represents all true poetry as a gift from the hand of truth (*der Dichtung Schleier aus der Hand der Wahrheit*). Thus the poem might be described as a confession of poetic faith.

How far Frau von Stein was in his mind is not certain, but that her influence is indirectly referred to is beyond question. He himself wrote to her that she would be able to "*extract from the poem what belonged to her*". She was undoubtedly in a sense the inspiration of the new *Dichterweihe* of his great classical works — *Iphigenie* (1786), *Tasso* (1789), and *Hermann und Dorothea* (1799).

On the metre, the *Ottava Rima*, see Introduction page LVI.

l. 6. *der neuen Blume, each new flower.*

l. 10. *ein Nebel.* Goethe frequently draws images from the mist, which is a favourite subject with him. In a letter to Frau von Stein, written from Jena on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1785, occur the words, which are generally taken to refer to the *Zueignung*: "Die Tage sind sehr schön; wie der Nebel fiel, bachte ich an den Anfang meines Gedichts. Die Idee dazu habe ich hier im Tale gefunden. Hätte ich dir nur die angenehme Aussicht zeigen können!" If this scene was the first inspiration of the poem it would be only another instance of a natural picture suggesting a poetic image.

l. 11. *Wich und wechselte, shifted and changed its form.*

l. 30. *Ein göttlich Weib.* The uninflected adjective, which was regular in older German, is often employed in poetry and higher diction before a neuter noun, rarely before those of another gender. The uninflected adjective is also found in a few idiomatic phrases: *bar Geld, gut Heil, auf gut Glück* etc.

Examples of this construction are frequent in Goethe's poetry, as will appear from the following list taken from our selection:

1. 33-37. The threefold address, *Kennst du mich nicht?* *Erlernst du mich?* *Du kennst mich wohl* does not show the gradual recognition, but is rather a rhetorical form of expressing her various relations to him.

1. 38. *Fest und fester*. A favourite form with Goethe in place of the usual *fester und fester* or *immer fester!* Another example in this poem is *schwer und schwerer* l. 106. Other instances are: *fern und fernher* (*Amor als Landschaftsmaler* No. 29 l. 36), *rot und röter* (*Epilog* No. 33 l. 49), *naß und nässer* (*Bauberlehrling* No. 40 l. 85).

I. 39—44. The figure is plainly poetic truth or truthful poetry after which he had blindly struggled in his boyhood (als Knabe schon I. 40) and stormy youth, when in company with his fellow *Stürmer und Dränger*, Klinger, Lenz etc. he strayed from the path in his search (cf. I. 53 *Da ich irrte hatt' ich viel Gespielen*).

1. 54. Now that he is once more on the right path in his search for Poetic Truth, he finds himself almost alone, neglected, and misunderstood. This was the case with

Goethe himself, whose popularity fell away with a public which had applauded his *Götz* and was disappointed at not getting from him further works of the same nature.

l. 58. *Euch* = *euch Menschen*, *to you mortals*. She reproves him mildly for his confident assertion of being now at last on the right path (cf. 54 *da ich dich fenne*), and reminds him that no consciousness of superiority to one's fellowmen (*Übermensch*, *Titan*) relieves one from the simple human responsibilities. Cf. the *Erbgeist*'s reproach of Faust's boastfulness: „*Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst, nicht mir*” (*Faust I* l. 514).

l. 70. *Pfund*, *Talent*, in the biblical sense. The poet accepts the reproof, but declares the purity of his motives in wishing to share with his fellows the inestimable treasure which he has himself discovered.

l. 96. The goddess here calls herself directly Truth, but it is Poetic Truth still, Truth around which is woven the veil of poetry (cf. ll. 87 and 88 *er floß um sie und schwoll in tausend Falten*). The present she gives, *'the veil of poetry'*, is woven from the breath of the morning and the clearness of noon; it is that poetry which was the only poetry Goethe in his maturity would know, that which is afraid of no facts and can stand the noonday light of truth.

l. 101. *Wehen*, a verb (= *to blow*), used here substantively in the sense of *storm*, *tempest*.

l. 102. *Die Grust*: Even death itself becomes softened and beautified, an idealised picture of rest.

l. 105. *Freunde*. Especially Herder and Frau von Stein, who were at this time the strongest influences in his life.

This last stanza expresses Goethe's gospel and philosophy — a calm and cheerful enjoyment of life, in the midst of friends and occupations, and hallowed and beautified by Truth and Poetry.

l. 108. *Mit goldenen Früchten schmückt*. Goethe is fond of applying the adjective *golden* to express the highest perfection. Instances of its use in this sense occur frequently:

*golden schönen* (*Mailied No. 4 l. 14*)

*goldnen Stunden* (*An Belinden No. 7 l. 9*)

*goldne Träume* (*Auf dem See No. 8 l. 10*)

*die goldnen Märchen* (*Der Rattenfänger No. 38 l. 12*).

## I. Lieder.

No lyric poet, with the exception perhaps of Heinrich Heine, occupies so high a place in the popular estimation as Goethe. This is principally due to his *Lieder*, the short lyrical pieces in the narrower sense of the word — *Gefühlslýrif* as opposed to *Gedankenlýrif* — which Goethe himself placed at the head of his collected poems.

Although Goethe himself made no attempt at any arrangement of the *Lieder*, a careful study of his biography enables us to divide them into certain groups, inasmuch as the *Lieder* to a greater extent than any of his other works are from their very essence, to use his own words, "*fragments of one great confession*".

If he had not pointed out in more than one passage of his works the close connection between these short lyrical pieces and the events of his life, the significant couplet which appears as an introduction to the *Lieder* might be adduced as a proof:

„Spät erlangt, was früh erlangt,  
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang!“

Following this principle we have:

- The Strassburg and Sesenheim songs, referring principally to Frederike Brion, and which include *Willkommen und Abschied*, *Heidenröslein*, *Maitied* etc.
- The songs referring to Lili Schönemann of which the principal are: *Neue Liebe neues Leben*, *An Belinden*, *Auf dem See*, *Jägers Abendlied* (?).
- Certain poems which can with less certainty be attributed to Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein: *Rastlose Liebe*, *An die Entfernte* (?), *Ein Gleichtes* (?) and *Trost in Tränen* (?).

d) Lastly a fourth group of poems from *Wilhelm Meister* — *Der Harfenspieler*, *Mignon* etc. — reflect the feelings of characters which owe their existence purely to the poet's fancy.

The real charm of Goethe's songs lies in their freshness, simplicity and spontaneity, thereby recalling — though much superior in artistic execution — the *Volkslieder*, in the spirit of which they were conceived. The resemblance is visible also in the outward form, in the cadence of the verse and generally in the style. Goethe borrowed from the *Volkslied* alliteration, assonance, frequent repetition of words or verses; the varied and subtle rhythm; the refrain, the short lively turns; the suppression of the article, the placing of the adjective after the substantive, numerous diminutives, frequent elisions and many other peculiarities of the popular lyric which will be discussed under the different poems.

As in his models, the leading theme of Goethe's Lieder is love, „*der Liebe Lust und Leid*” — love in all its varied aspects.

So perfect is the harmony and rhythm of these beautiful little songs that almost all the great composers of Germany — Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann and more especially Schubert — have found in them the inspiration for some of their most beautiful melodies.

## 2. Willkommen und Abschied.

This poem, which was written in the spring of 1771, is a reflection of the poet's relations to Friederike Brion, the daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim. It was probably inspired by the visit in the autumn of 1770 when he was still all doubt and diffidence. Goethe

himself at the age of sixty-one associates it with a visit to Sesenheim, and undoubtedly had it in his mind in his description of the ride in the *Österferien*, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Book XI). — „Leider verzogen sich die Unstalten, und ich kam nicht so früh weg, als ich gehofft hatte. So stark ich auch ritt, überfiel mich doch die Nacht. Der Weg war nicht zu verfehlten, und der Mond beleuchtete mein leidenschaftliches Unternehmen. Die Nacht war windig und schauerlich, ich sprengte zu, um nicht bis morgen früh auf ihren Anblick warten zu müssen.“

The vigorous style and movement are quite in keeping with Lessing's dictum that poetry should deal not with conditions but actions. It shows the new life, the nature and truthfulness which his poetry had acquired in Strassburg under the influence of Herder and the new worlds which the latter had opened up to him — Homer, Shakespeare and popular songs. The setting is typical — the happy meeting of the lovers, and their passionate sorrowful parting in the early morning, and might be compared to the famous scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

l. 3. *wiegte*. There is a wonderful vigour in the verbs of personification *wiegte*, *sah*, *schwangen*, *schuf*, which represent Nature as living before us.

l. 6. *ein aufgestürmter Riese*, a towering giant.

ll 9—16. Contrast of the dark night with its uncanny sights and sounds and the joyful mood and passionate expectation of the ardent lover.

l. 21. *Ein rosenfarbnes Frühlingswetter* i. e. the rosy colour in which love sees all things.

l. 29. *Zur Erden*. Old weak dative singular, still found in poetry, and preserved in certain expressions, such as *auf Erden*, *zu Ehren* etc. and also in compounds, e. g. *Sonnenschein* etc. Goethe is especially fond of this old form in those of his poems which are in the spirit of the *Vollkslieder*, and also in those which recall the style of Hans Sachs. Examples are: *Heiden* (*Heidenröslein* No. 3 ll. 2, 7 und 9), *der Frauen* (*Meine Göttin* No. 22 l. 66),

Auf Erden, Seltens, Frauen (Hans Sachs No. 25 ll. 67, 75, 130), auf der Straßen (Legende No. 31 l. 6).

l. 29 and 30. More true and effective than the original form: Du glingst, ich stund und sah zur Erden,  
Und sah dir nach mit nassem Blid.

### 8. Heidenröslein.

The origin of this poem has been the subject of much dispute. The fact of the matter would appear to be that it was written by Goethe in free modification of an old popular song, and sent or given to Herder, who forgot, if he ever knew, its authorship and took it for one of the Alsatian folksongs collected by Goethe and sent to him in 1771. Herder published a version which is essentially our poem, though differing in many details, in his *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* in 1773 under the title *Fabelliédchen*, and this version was reprinted with slight alterations in his *Volkslieder* in 1779 with the title *Röschen auf der Heide*. It first appeared in its present form in *Schriften*, 1789.

The poem, which recalls the ballad tone, seems to refer, though only indirectly, to Friederike Brion.

l. 2. Heiden. See Note on *Willkommen und Abschied* (No. 2) l. 29.

l. 16. 's Röslein for das Röslein is a case of elision, frequent in popular poetry, as is also the inversion lief er in l. 4.

ll. 17—19. These verses run in the *Fabelliédchen*:

Das Röslein wehrte sich und stand  
Über er vergaß darnach  
Beim Genuss das Leiden.  
Röslein ic.

### 4. Mai lied.

Usually assigned to the spring of 1771, in which Goethe spent a great part of May at Sesenheim at

Friederike's side. There is no reason to doubt that Friederike is the inspiration. It is a pure outburst of rapture in the joy of living and loving. Just as the spring sun gives life and productivity to nature, so her love gives him strength and inspiration for new creations.

It first appeared in 1775 in the periodical *Fräulein* under the title *Manifest*, and was taken into *Schriften*, 1789.

l. 14. *golden*: a favourite word of Goethe for describing any form of perfection. Cp. Note to *Büneignung* No. 1 l. 108.

l. 19. *Blütendampf*, the *fragrance of the flowers*.

### 5. An die Erwählte.

Though the poem first appeared in *Schriften*, 1800, the opinion that it was written in the nineties seems opposed to the whole spirit of the poem. The whole situation is that of a young man leaving his beloved in order to win his way in the world, not that of a man in middle life.

l. 6. *Nach dem Sturme*. He still has the turbulent period of his life before him — the strife for existence and independence.

l. 9 and 10. *Frisch vollbracht*. This is a free rendering of the proverb: *Frisch gewagt ist halb gewonnen*.

l. 13 and 14. Despair vanishes with the brave resolution to overcome all obstacles to their union.

l. 17. Already he sees in imagination their future home.

### 6. Neue Liebe neues Leben.

There is little doubt that this poem owes its origin to Lili (Elisabeth Schönemann), whose acquaintance Goethe made at the end of 1774, to whom he was for a time engaged, and who married in 1776 the

banker, von Türckheim. He says as much in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Book XVII), where he gives this poem and the following one, *An Belinden*, as directly portraying his relationship to Lili.

The unpleasant side of the relationship, expressed in this poem, is more plainly stated in the humorous poem *Lilis Park* (*Vermischte Gedichte*), and in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Book XVII) where he says: „An die Äußerlichkeiten jedoch, an das Mätschen und Wiedermätschen eines geselligen Zustandes hatte ich nicht gedacht. Ein unbezwingliches Verlangen war herrschend geworden; ich konnte nicht ohne sie, sie nicht ohne mich sein; aber in den Umgebungen und bei den Einwirkungen einzelner Glieder ihres Kreises, was ergaben sich da oft für Mißtage und Fehlstunden!“

The poem was probably written early in 1775. It appeared in *Fris*, 1775 and was taken into *Schriften*, 1789.

l. 1. *Herz, mein Herz.* For the poet's address to his heart compare: *Stille, Liebchen, mein Herz!* (*Mut* l. 5.) — *was soll das geben?*, what is the meaning of it all?

l. 7. *deine Ruh'.* He had been comparatively heart-whole for some time; in fact, with the exception of the relationship to Maximiliane Brentano (La Roche), since his return from Wetzlar.

l. 9. *Jugendblüte.* Lili was not seventeen when Goethe first knew her.

l. 17. To account for the paralysis of his will, which has robbed him of freedom and independence, he compares her to a sorceress, a kind of Circe, who holds him by magic a prisoner, enslaved to her will.

l. 24. *Liebe! Liebel! Lass' mich los!* This is not an appeal to Love as an abstraction, but to Lili. Thus it is equivalent to *Geliebte* or *Liebste*.

### 7. *An Belinden.*

Refers like the previous poem to Lili, and is quoted directly after it in the XVII<sup>th</sup> Book of *Dichtung*

und Wahrheit, in illustration of the relationship (See No. 6: Note). The mood and the motive are almost exactly the same. The situation is that described to the Countess Stolberg in a letter of February 13, 1775, in which he represents himself as making love to Lili in a laced coat. Like the previous poem it was probably written early in 1775. In the passage of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Bk. XX) he narrates how during the time, in October 1775, when he was waiting in anxious expectancy for the carriage that was to take him to Weimar, he roamed about the town at night muffled in a big cloak, and standing under Lili's window, heard her sing this very song, „*das nicht ganz vor einem Jahr an sie gedichtet ward*“.

It appeared first in *Fris* in March 1775, a fact which is noteworthy when considering how obviously it portrayed the relationship in which Goethe then stood.

*Belinde* is the title of the lady in the dedicatory verses of *Erwin und Elmire*, which opened the same number of *Fris*. It was at the time a stock name for the lady beloved.

1. 2. *Brädt*. Lili's family were wealthy and fashionable.  
1. 9. *goldnen*. cf. No. 1 l. 108 Note.

1. 17—20. In spite of the many unpleasantnesses she is now dearer to him than the Springtime, and he can see Nature only through her.

### 8. *Auf dem See.*

Written on Lake Zürich on the morning of June 15<sup>th</sup>. In May he started from Frankfort, in the company of the Counts Stolberg; for Switzerland, to try if it was possible by flight to free himself from the bonds of his love for Lili and put an end to the state of

distraction and restlessness in which he was kept by his love and the struggle to resist it.

We read in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Book XVIII: „Wir schifften uns ein, und führten an einem glänzenden Morgen den herrlichen See hinauf.

Möge ein eingeschaltetes Gedicht von jenen glücklichen Momenten einige Ahnung herüberbringen”: whereupon follows the present poem.

A few lines further on we find:

„Wie mir zu Mute gewesen, deuten folgende Zeilen an, wie sie, damals geschrieben, noch in einem Gedenkheftchen aufbewahrt sind:

Wenn ich, liebe Lilli, dich nicht liebte  
Welche Wonnen gäb' mir dieser Blick,  
Und doch, wenn ich, Lilli, dich nicht liebte,  
Wär', was wär' mein Glück?”

The three strophes are each in a different metre, the first having an Iambic, the second a Trochaic rhythm, while that of the third is ascending and consists principally of Iambics with occasional Anapaests. The change of the varying emotions is wonderfully reflected in the change of rhythm — the first strophe with its lively ascending rhythm portraying the new life in the contemplation and enjoyment of Nature, the second with its Trochaic measure reflecting the tender melancholy felt at the thought of the loved one he has left, while in the third strophe the triumphant delight in nature, which has conquered even his love, breaks forth in the lively and jubilant anapaests.

Auf der Welle blitzen,  
Tausend schwébende Stérne  
etc. etc.

1.1. Und. A favourite opening of Goethe in imitation of Biblical language: cf. *Epilog zu Schillers Göde*. No. 33. The first strophe expresses the delight in nature, the new birth after the wretched indecision and doubt of his recent artificial life.

l. 7. *wolfig himmelan*, *with cloud-wreathed crowns*. It was originally *wolkenangetan*.

l. 9. *Aug, mein Aug*. Compare the poet's address to his heart in *Neue Liebe neues Leben* No. 6 l. 1.

l. 10. *goldne*. cf. No. 1 l. 108 Note.

l. 12. He refuses to let his love of nature and joy in life be destroyed by any morbid thoughts of his unhappy love.

l. 15 and 16. The mists on the distant hilltops (*fürmende Ferne*) swallow the further view from his sight.

l. 20. *die reisende Frucht*, the ripening cornfields on the banks.

Von Loeper, however, prefers to refer *die reisende Frucht* to the fruit growing on the trees and reflected in the water.

### 9. Rafflose Liebe.

Written in May 1776 at Ilmenau, whither Goethe had been sent by the Duke to examine a fire. On May 4<sup>th</sup> he writes to the Duke: „*Hier ist schon den ganzen Morgen Schnee*”. A copy by Herder bears the date May 6, 1776. It was first printed in *Schriften*, 1789. It is an outcome of his love for Frau von Stein, the new influence which had come into his life, and which was to remain for the next ten years the predominating one.

As in the preceding poem we have a change of rhythm coinciding with a change of mood. The first strophe, describing the vigorous battle with the elements, the energetic defiance of all opposition, has an ascending rhythm, Iambics with some Anapaests: the change to the sentimental brooding frame of mind of the second strophe is accompanied by the change to a descending rhythm, Dactyls with an intermixture of Trochees.

l. 7 and 9. The whole strophe develops the thought that the vain yearnings and longings of life are harder to bear than its real sorrows.

l. 12. *Herzen* is in each case Singular.

l. 15. Herder's copy has: *Wie? Soll ich fliehen?* which would considerably alter the whole of what precedes, making the idea of flight now first occur to him, instead of the whole being a picture of his attempt to deaden the yearnings of love by restless movement and activity.

### 10. Wandrer's Nachlied I.

Written on February 12, 1776 on the slope of the Ettersberg, and sent to Frau von Stein. It was first printed in 1780 in Pfenninger's *Christliches Magazin*, with a melody by Kayser, under the title *Um Friede*. Taken into *Schriften*, 1789.

The peace which he here yearns for amid the restlessness and unsatisfied longing of his love for Charlotte von Stein is peace in the biblical sense, "*the peace of God which passeth all understanding*".

l. 1. *Der du*. This opening with a relative is a liberty freely employed since Klopstock, and one of which Goethe was very fond and which he used with excellent effect. cf. Faust: l. 638.

*Die uns das Leben gaben, herrliche Gefühle  
Erstarren in dem irdischen Gewühle*  
and Zauberlehrling No. 40 l. 91.

*Die ich rief, die Geister  
Wer'd' ich nun nicht los.*

The subject addressed is not given till v. 7.

l. 2. *Alles Leid und Schmerzen* is of course grammatically incorrect, as it should be either *alle Leiden und Schmerzen* (both Substantives) or *alles Leiden und Schmerzen* (both Infinitives), but Goethe prefers the pregnancy of expression to formal correctness.

### 11. An den Mond.

The poem is generally connected with the suicide of Christiane von Lassberg in the Ilm from disappointment in love on January 16, 1778. It was sent

to Frau von Stein on January 19, 1778. This original version was very different from the present form, which the poem received before the Italian journey, and in which all direct references to Fräulein von Lassberg and Frau von Stein are absent.

l. 9. The moonlight awakens in him various memories, glad and sorrowful, of his past life.

l. 11. *wandle*: supply *id.*

l. 13. The water flowing past reminds him of the mutability of all things, and his thoughts pass to the loss of a loved one, possibly Lili.

l. 22. cf. *Rastlose Liebe* No. 9 l. 6.

l. 23. He thinks of the river as in all its various moods supplying a melody to inspire his songs.

Strophes 8 and 9 express the happiness of living far from the world, with one true friend with whom to share the subtle blending of thoughts that pass through the mind on such a night, and which that world has no conception of or does not truly value.

The whole poem reflects the brooding mood of a solitary walk by moonlight, with a mind freely acted on by the influences of the moment. It is needless and hopeless to look for a logical sequence of ideas or train of thought, as the poem itself suggests in the last strophe.

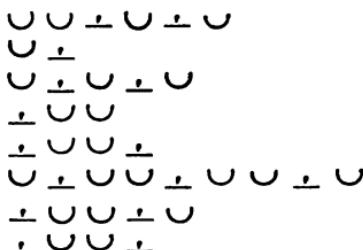
## 12. *Ein Gleichen.*

This short poem, one of the most famous Goethe ever wrote, was composed on the night between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1780 in the wooden shooting-box on the *Giebelhahn*, the highest point of the hills around Ilmenau, where he spent the night. It was written in pencil on the wooden wall of his bedroom, and the writing was renewed by Goethe on August 29, 1813, and seen for the last time by him on August 27, 1831, the evening before his last birthday, when he read the

poem aloud, and repeated with tears the last words:  
 Ja; warte nur, balde ruhest du auch!

The poem first appeared in *Werke*, 1815.

The metre is as follows:



The rime is especially fine, as it carries almost all the essential words.

1. 1—3. The difference in meaning between *Gipfel* and *Wipfel* is here well observed. *Gipfel* means generally the *highest point*, *the summit* (of a house, mountain, happiness). Cf. l. 78, 899 of *Harzreise im Winter* No. 21: Und Altar des lieblichsten Dank's || Wird ihm des gefürchteten Gipfels schnebehangener Scheitel. *Wipfel* should only be used of the *tops of trees*, as in *Amor als Landschaftsmaler* No. 29 l. 24: die Wipfel frisch erquidter Bäume. The two are sometimes used synonymously, however, though generally through *Gipfel* being used for *Wipfel* — rarely the reverse. Cf. l. 56 of the last quoted poem, where *Gipfel* is equivalent to *Wipfel*.

### 18. Mignon.

The poem was first printed at the head of the third book of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795), where it is sung by Mignon, the little Italian girl whom Wilhelm had rescued from the band of itinerant rope-dancers who had stolen and adopted her. It was included as a separate poem in *Werke*, 1815.

In the longing for her Italian home, which Goethe thus places in the mouth of Mignon, he expresses his own great longing for that land which was still the

unattained goal of his aspirations. Mignon's delivery of the verses is thus described in the *Lehrjahre*, (Book III, Chap. I), and is the best commentary on the mood which they are meant to portray.

„Sie sang jeden Vers feierlich und prächtig an, als ob sie auf etwas Sonderbares aufmerksam machen, als ob sie etwas Wichtiges vortragen wollte. Bei der dritten Beile ward der Gesang dumpfer und düsterer; das: Kennst du es wohl? drückte sie geheimnisvoll und bedächtig aus; in dem: Dahin! dahin! lag eine unwiderstehliche Sehnsucht, und ihr: Laß uns ziehn! wußte sie bei jeder Wiederholung vergestalt zu modifizieren, daß es bald bittend und dringend, bald treibend und vielversprechend war.“

The first strophe describes the land of her longing, the second the country house in which she had played as a child, the third the way over the St. Gothard.

The refrain was originally in each strophe *O mein Gebieter*, as compared with which the present gradation, *Geliebter*, *Beschützer*, *Vater* is a great gain, expressing with delicate shades of meaning the various relations in which Mignon conceived herself as standing to Wilhelm.

Another important change was that of the first verse, which originally stood: Kennst du den Ort etc. By this slight alteration the whole poem is given a wider bearing, expressing no longer the mere yearning of a child for the place of its birth, but becoming an allegorical expression of the Northern longing for the land of the Hesperides.

I. 10 and 11. The statues appear to the child to be looking at her with eyes of pity for her lonely state.

I. 13. *Beschützer*. When thinking only of the bright beautiful land she addresses Wilhelm as *Geliebter*; now at the thought of the lonely house he appears to her as a *protector*: when describing the terrors of the way she feels even more the need of his protection and calls him *father*.

1. 16. The way appears to her imagination painted in all the terrors of her first forced journey away from home and native land.

#### 14. An die Entfernung.

The poem appeared first in *Schriften*, 1789, but at what time previous to that date it was written is not known. That it refers to Frau von Stein is a mere supposition, nothing whatever in fact being known of its inspiration and associations.

7 and 8. These lines have a great similarity to the lines in *Faust* I l. 1094—1095:

Wenn über uns, im blauen Raum verloren  
Ihr schmetternd Lied die Lerche singt. —

#### 15. Schäfers Klageslied.

As is so often the case with Goethe, this poem appears to have been inspired by a *Volkslied*, while its tone and language are both those of popular poetry. It was probably written at Jena in the spring of 1801.

The shepherd leaning on his staff thinks of his beloved, the daughter of the knight, whose castle he can see, and watches the door from which he has seen her come so often. Yet he tells himself that this is vain, for she has gone, perhaps even to distant lands, and he drives his sheep on, giving vent to his grief in one last sorrowful exclamation.

1. 1. A common popular opening: cf. Herder's *Volkslieder*:

Ich steh' auf einem hohen Berg,  
Seh' 'nunter ins tiefe Tal.

and Walter von der Vogelweide:

Ich sass auf eime Steine.

2. The picture of the shepherd leaning on his staff and looking down into the valley while his faithful dog lies at his feet was a favourite one in classical literature.

l. 7 and 8. So lost in thought is he that he follows the sheep unconsciously without noticing the way, and suddenly finds himself in the flowery meadow.

l. 11. He plucks the flowers by force of habit, forgetting that she to whom he used to give them is gone.

l. 13. This strophe reminds us of Schiller's *Ritter Toggenburg*.

l. 17. The rainbow is here not to be understood in the sense of an emblem of peace; the reference is to the popular myth that at the foot of the rainbow will be found a treasure of gold. This might formerly have been true, but now is bitter irony.

## 16. *Trost in Tränen.*

Once again Goethe is indebted for his inspiration to a *Volkslied*, which appeared first in Nicolai's *Almanach* (1778) and later in Arnim and Brentano's collection of *Volkslieder* entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806—1808).

The first two strophes run as follows:

Wie kommt's, daß du so traurig bist  
Und gar nit einmal lachst?  
Ich seh' dir's an den Augen an  
Dß du geweinet hast.

Und wenn ich auch geweinet hab'  
Was geht's einen andern an?  
Ich wein', daß du es weißt, um Freud',  
Die mir nicht werden kann.

The poem is a dialogue between the lover and a friend, who summons him to tell the cause of his sorrow and tries to rouse him to forget his grief in activity and in the exercise of his youthful powers of enjoyment. The lover answers that though the object of his longing is as unattainable as the stars, he finds delight in its contemplation, and consolation in his nights of weeping.

It first appeared in Wieland and Goethe's *Taschenbuch* (1804), and was included in *Werke* (1806).

The title means *Trost durch Tränen*, consolation through, not *in the midst of*, tears.

1. 7. Cf. *Leiden des jungen Werther*: „Das letzte Lobsal der bittersten Tränen“.

1. 24. *Stern* is a favourite word of Goethe as an image of what is most precious and dearest.

1. 25. This line has become proverbial.

### 17. *Gefunden*.

Written on August 26, 1813, and sent as a letter to his wife. It commemorates the completion of twenty-five years of their union, for it was 25 years before, in 1788, that he had made the acquaintance of Christiane Vulpius. It is a simple little parable from nature (like *Heidenröslein*), and describes Goethe's relationship to Christiane in its origin and subsequent development.

1. 2. *für mich hin*, *lost in thought*, without any fixed goal or purpose.

1. 10. *fein*, a thoroughly popular tautological use of the word, quite in keeping with the *Vollstüd* tone of the whole.

## II. ODES.

Goethe composed about a score of Odes, all when he was still in the ardour of youth. The most beautiful of these fall naturally into two periods.

a) The first period extends from 1772—1774 and includes *Wandrers Sturmlied* (1772), *Mahomet's Gesang* (1772—1773), *Prometheus* (1774) and *Schwager Kronos* (same year).

b) To the second period belong *Harzreise im Winter* (1777), *Gesang der Geister über den Wassern* (1779), *Meine Göttin* (1780), *Grenzen der Menschheit* (1781) and *Das Göttliche* (1783, or somewhat earlier).

The first series are the product of the period of Storm and Stress, the time of tumultuous aspirations, of feverish activity both physical and mental.

No form of poetry could have been better suited than the ode to embody the ever-changing emotions that were then besetting the poet's mind. Yet the boldest soars of Goethe's imagination are always checked by an instinctive feeling for measure and beauty, and by a careful study of classical models. At Strassburg, Herder had initiated him into the cult of Homer, to whom he remained faithful all his life; at Frankfurt, at Wetzlar, his enthusiasm redoubled, and here he devoted special attention to Pindar. A curious letter to Herder (cf. *Wuß Herders Nachlaß* I, 37) shows with what eagerness he had drunk in the poetry of the greatest lyrical genius of ancient Greece: "*I am now living in Pindar, and if the splendour of the palace made one happy, I ought to be so*". What attracted the representative of the period of Storm and Stress in Pindar, as we can gather from this letter, was the exuberance of feeling, the „*volle, ganz von einer Empfindung volle Herz*”, as Goethe puts it already in the first version of *Götz*, and also Pindar's idealistic and heroic conception of life, and the bold turns and images of his language.

The Odes of the second period mark a gradual calming of the poet's mind; he sings absolute submission to the laws of destiny, whose high wisdom he has learnt in the Ethics of Spinoza. This change of ideas and sentiments betrays itself in the style, the poetic

imagery and even the rhythmical movement of these later productions. Goethe seemed to have been conscious of this achievement of calm and composure, and perceiving that the '*divine fire*' of youth, so essential to the ode, was no longer his, he left that form for the stanza, and the stanza again for the elegy, guided by his unfailing rhythmical instinct, which invariably answered to the changing movements of his soul.

The Odes of Goethe are written in *Free Rhythms* (cf. Introduction II. A page XLV), in lines of unequal length, without rime, and without strophic arrangement, differing in this respect from those of Pindar, which are connected by the regular return of the same verses in the antistrophe, and sometimes in the epode. It must not be imagined that this rhythm is left to chance; if it has no written code or visible rule, it is subservient to emotional necessity, to the slower or more rapid march of the poet's mood.

### 18. Mahomet's Gesang.

The whole is in the style of Pindar's triumphant odes. It is a notable example of the double current in Goethe's poetry, for together with the Pindaric influence we feel throughout the spirit of *Sturm und Drang*.

It was written in 1773, and probably in the first months of that year, not as an independent poem, but as part of the tragedy of *Mahomet*, which Goethe then contemplated, but which remained a fragment. In *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (end of Bk. XVIII) he says: „*Mehrere einzuschaltende Gesänge wurden vorläufig gedichtet; von denen ist allein noch übrig, was, über schrieben Mahomet's Gesang, unter meinen Gedichten steht. Im Stütze sollte Ali, zu Ehren seines Meisters, auf dem höchsten Punkte des Gelingens, diesen Gesang*

vortragen, kurz vor der Umwendung, die durch das Gift geschieht."

It was sent in April 1773 to Boie for the Göttinger Musenalmanach under the title *Gesang als Wechselgesang*, a hymn in dialogue form between Mahomet's cousin Ali and daughter Fatima, Ali's wife. Under the image of a river it paints in glowing colours of love and admiration the master's course from its commencement to its present culmination of power and glory.

Springing up unknown in the desert, yet full of the consciousness of his power, he had pressed irresistibly forward on his predestined path, gathering more and more tributary forces around him, till he appears at last (in the imagination of his enthusiastic worshippers) as a world-conqueror and a world-force.

The title might be misleading, as it is a *song to Mahomet*, and not one placed in his mouth.

It is written in free rimeless strophes (cf. Introduction II A page XLIII et seq.), of varying length, though occasional rimes are found (cf. ll. 1 and 2, 10 and 11), while notable are the repetitions of the same endings in 18—19, 22—23, 32—35, 45—48. The rhythmic stream grows with the river, and becomes mightiest with the entrance into the plain.

I. 16. He already begins to draw others within his influence.

I. 22. No pleasing prospect, no temptations of ease or pleasure, can turn him from his path.

Cf. Faust I l. 1699 ff.

*Wer'd' ich zum Augenblide sagen:  
Verweile doch! du bist so schön!*

I. 27. *Schlängenwandelnd* = *sich schlängelnd*, *meandering*, i. e. not afraid of detours if necessary to attain his end.

I. 34. Others appeal to him to become their leader, and lead them on towards the sea.

l. 37. Ωzean: as the source of all the waters, symbolical of the Universal Creator.

l. 49. Put by Ali into the mouth of Mahomet himself.

l. 56. The glories he has created do not retain him, but he rolls on past them to the sea.

l. 60. Gebärnhäuser, in antithesis to Marmorhäuser (v. 58). Ships of cedar-wood are not uncommon in the East.

l. 65—68. All other successes are subordinated to the fixed and immovable purpose of the Reformer, who leads his followers to God.

### 19. An Schwager Chronos.

According to Goethe's own account, written in the postchaise on October 10, 1774, probably when returning to Frankfort after accompanying Klopstock, who had been staying in his parents' house, some distance on the way to Karlsruhe. Like the preceding Ode, it is permeated with the spirit of Storm and Stress, and shows at the same time a strong Pindaric influence. Chronos, the God of Time, humorously addressed as Schwager (a popular nickname for a postilion), is driving the poet through life.

The whole situation reminds us of the words put into the mouth of Egmont (Act II): „Wie von unsichtbaren Geistern gepeitscht, gehen die Sonnenpferde der Zeit mit unsers Schicksals leichtem Wagen durch; und uns bleibt nichts, als, mutig gefaßt, die Bügel festzuhalten und bald rechts, bald links, vom Steine hier, vom Sturze da, die Räder abzulenken“.

The various strophes describe the different stages of life—the boy's reckless light-hearted entrance into life, the period of striving, the period of attainment and of confident power, the pleasant episode of healthy enjoyment, and the restless haste to conclude the journey before being overtaken by the inaction of age.

1. 2. Den rasselnden Trott, is an accusative of motion.  
Cf. ll. 7, 10, 24–25, 38.

1. 4. zögert usually intransitive, *to delay*, has here the unusual transitive signification *to bring about by delay*.

1. 10. eratmenden, *breathing heavily* from exertion. Cf. Faust I l. 486: „Du siehst eratmend mich zu schauen“.

1. 18. ahndevoll = ahnungsvoll, *filled with the presentiment* of.

1. 19. Überdach, the projecting roof of the country inn.

1. 21. Frischung = Erfrischung.

1. 22. Contains a very unusual transposition of the Genitive, des Mädchens of course depending on Blid.

1. 23. He first addresses himself, then the Kellnerin.

1. 29. Nebelduft: the clouding over of life in old age.

1. 30. schnattern = flattern, *chatter*, a word which cannot be properly applied to the schlitternde Gebein, *the shaking limbs*. The verb is thus employed twice with change of meaning (*Zeugma*).

1. 32. Trunken is a pure Latinism, German syntax requiring here trunken, not the appositional Accusative, but the uninflected predicative adjective.

It should also be noticed that trunken is really the old past participle of trinken without the prefix ge. It only survives as an adjective in more elevated style.

1. 34. sündumend, to be understood of the tears brought to the eye by looking at the setting sun.

1. 36. Hölle, Hades, the abode of departed spirits, presided over by Orcus (the Wirt. l. 41).

This picture of the miseries of age and the fervent wish for a full but brief life suggests inevitably the contrast of Goethe's own long life and serene old age.

## 20. Prometheus.

Like the two preceding Odes, a product of the Sturm und Drang period, and most Titanic of all the creations even of that most restless time of Goethe's life, the Frankfort years after the return from Wetzlar. It is not the Greek fettered Prometheus we have here, but a Prometheus who from a guileless faith in the

Gods has come to the conviction of their selfishness and even of their limitations — to the conclusion that, as he conquered the Titans alone and unaided, so he must rely upon himself in all the crises of life, and that as the Gods are lords of heaven so he is lord of earth and of his kind. He has believed in Gods who cared for his fate and were masters of it, but now he recognises as his superiors only fate and time, which made him and to which the Gods too are subject, and is forming a race like himself, to live, enjoy and suffer, free and self-reliant, and asking, like himself, nothing from the Gods.

This Ode was written later than the Prometheus Fragment, of which two Acts were completed in 1773, and into which it was later taken up. In the Fifteenth Book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe speaks at length of the origin of the Fragment and the Ode, and we see here again that poetic production was not the result of abstract reflection and speculation, but the embodiment of a phase and period of the poet's life. The whole passage is of great interest; the following quotations will show to what extent Goethe is himself the central figure of the poem.

„Indem ich mich also nach Bestätigung der Selbständigkeit umsah, fand ich als die sicherste Base derselben mein produktives Talent. . . . Wie ich nun über diese Naturgabe nachdachte und fand, daß sie mir ganz eigen angehöre und durch nichts Fremdes weder begünstigt noch gehindert werden könne, so mochte ich gern hierauf mein ganzes Dasein in Gedanken gründen. Diese Vorstellung verwandelte sich in ein Bild; die alte mythische Figur des Prometheus fiel mir auf, der, abgesondert von den Göttern, von seiner Werkstatt aus eine Welt bevölkerte.“

The whole passage should however be read.

l. 1. *deinen Himmel*. Here in the first line we already have the contrast drawn between heaven, where Zeus is omnipotent, and the earth which Prometheus claims as his (*meine Erde*), and where Zeus can at the most but work havoc with his bolts.

l. 10. *Glut*, the fire which Prometheus had stolen from heaven, thereby arousing the envy and hatred of the Gods.

l. 14—20. Similarly Lucian describes the Gods as greedy for the odour of fat, and Aristophanes in the *Birds* declares that the Gods would die if the birds cut off the supplies.

l. 18. *barbtet* is the conditional.

l. 23. *mein verirrtes Auge*. He was mistaken in imagining the Gods would hear or help him in his need.

l. 26. The Gods are less ready to help the unfortunate than he; he has been deceived too in judging of their pity by his own heart.

l. 45. He is in so far the equal of the Gods that they, like him, are subject to time and fate.

l. 46—50. Though all the fair dreams of youth have not come true, he will not hate life or flee it like a coward, but face it as it is.

Having ceased to trouble about Zeus he will busy himself with the formation of his kind, the human race. This conclusion of the most titanic of all the poems of Goethe's youth is then at one with that of all his philosophy, ending as it does in the resolve to turn from supernatural affairs and speculations to seek the welfare of his fellowmen, upon the basis of an enlightened and ideal Realism.

## 21. *Barreise im Winter*.

This poem owes a special interest to the fact that Goethe himself has given us a full account of its origin and inner meaning. In 1820 Dr. Kannegiesser, the Rector of the Gymnasium at Breslau and an enthusiastic Goethe student, published a commentary on the poem, and in the third Volume of his periodical *Über Kunst und Altertum* Goethe gave, together with a

warm appreciation of Dr. Kannegiesser's commentary, his own explanation of the circumstances and emotions to which the poem owed its origin. Those circumstances are now from various sources well known. In consequence of the complaints made by the peasants in the neighbourhood of Eisenach of the ravages committed by the game, Karl August determined to organise a great boar hunt, and it was agreed that Goethe should join him later, after first making an excursion to the Harz mountains. Goethe's object was twofold. First of all he wished to visit a young man named Plessing at Wernigerode, from whom he had received two letters, each filled with the most morbid and hypochondriacal introspection and asking Goethe's spiritual guidance and aid — a request which Goethe felt impelled to meet as he held himself partly responsible for this unwelcome result of his *Leiden des jungen Werther*. His second purpose was an inspection of the mining operations in the Harz, with a view to the re-opening of the Ilmenau works which he and Karl August had in prospect. With this twofold object he left Weimar alone on horseback on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1777, and after visiting Plessing and inspecting the mines, and in addition ascending the Brocken, on the summit of which he stood at midday December 10<sup>th</sup>, joined Karl August and the rest of the party at Eisenach. Such were the events which form the background of the poem, which was begun on December 1<sup>st</sup>, but probably not finished till after the return to Weimar. Goethe himself summarises the whole as follows:

„Das Thema desselben wäre also wohl folgendermaßen auszusprechen: der Dichter, in doppelter Absicht, ein unmittelbares Anschauen des Bergbaues zu gewinnen und einen jungen, äußerst hypochondrischen Selbstquäler

zu besuchen und aufzurichten, bedient sich der Gelegenheit, daß engverbundene Freunde zur Winterjagdlust ausziehn, um sich von ihnen auf kurze Zeit zu trennen.

So wie sie die rauhe Witterung nicht achten, unternimmt er nach seiner Seite hin jenen einsamen, wunderlichen Ritt. Es glückt ihm nicht nur, seine Wünsche erfüllt zu sehen, sondern auch durch eine ganz eigene Reihe von Anlässen, Wanderungen und Zufälligkeiten auf den beschneiten Brockengipfel zu gelangen. Von dem, was ihm während dieser Zeit durch den Sinn gezogen, schreibt er zuletzt kurz, fragmentarisch, geheimnisvoll, im Sinn und Ton des ganzen Unternehmens, kaum geregelte rhythmische Zeilen.

Durch einen ziemlichen Umweg schließt er sich wieder an die Brüder der Jagd, teilt ihre tagtäglichen heroischen Freuden, um Machts in Gegenwart einer prasselnden Kaminflamme sie durch Erzählung seiner wunderlichen Abenteuer zu ergößen und zu rühren."

In strength and vigour of image and language, in the freedom and movement of the rhythm, it is a continuation of the odes of the last Frankfort years.

The poem is not a description of the Harz, but the journey is merely a thread on which are strung the various emotions which he experienced. The poetic unity of the whole consists in the idea of the diversity of human fortunes, with which is coupled the thought of the certainty of fate's favour to him.

l. 1—5. The poet too chooses with careful eye, poised above the sea of human passions.

l. 6—18. He contrasts his own lot, on which Fortune has smiled, with that of the unfortunate Plessing.

l. 17. die doch bittere Schere. However much the unfortunate may hate their life they yet fear death when it comes. Schere in allusion to the Parcae or Fates who cut the thread of life.

l. 19—23. These lines are parenthetical, dictated probably by the instinctive necessity of keeping always the picture, the natural setting, before our eyes.

l. 19. *Didichtsſchauer, the thicket's gloom.*

l. 21—23. Here we have a happy use of the figure of speech known as Zeugma, by which means we get a striking image in a very compressed form, as the settling down into their marshes can only literally be applied to the reed-sparrows, and from that the figure of the rich nesting in the comfort of their cities must be evolved.

The alteration to *Steiger, herons*, of the 1806 and 1815 editions impoverishes the whole strophe.

l. 24—34. The poet again contrasts his own smooth and fortunate path with the gloomy clouded life of the unhappy Plessing.

l. 36. *Des, dem Balsam zu Gift warb.* The balsam of the love of mankind has turned into hatred of his fellows, and shunning human society he seeks in morbid self-examination the happiness that can only be found in communion with others.

l. 43—50. His pity for the unfortunate one turns into a prayer that he may have his eyes opened to all the sources of joy which, though unseen, are near to each.

l. 51—65. In these two strophes he compares different forms in which men find happiness. The friends he is about to join delight in the pleasures of the chase, he the poet in the golden dreams of his solitary hours. May Love veil him in her protecting clouds and deck him with a winter garland till with spring the roses bloom again!

l. 64. *die feudten Haare*, referring to the time of year, with its hoar-frost and mists.

l. 66. From here to the end the poet speaks of his journey and its various incidents and changing phases.

l. 67. *Fadel*: the moon. It was full-moon at the time.

l. 77. *Altar des lieblichsten Dank*. In a letter to Frau von Stein on the evening after his ascent of the Brocken on December 10<sup>th</sup> we find the passage: „Ich war oben heut und habe auf dem Teufelsaltar meinem Gott den liebsten Dank geopfert“.

l. 80. *Geisterreihen*, referring to the well-known superstition of the dance of the witches on the Blocksberg (Brocken) on Walpurgisnacht, the night between April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>.

l. 81. *ahnende Wölter*: superstitious in general, as are notably the Germanic races.

l. 82—end. The poet finally addresses the Brocken, which, though unbroached itself, stands amid brothers from whose veins flow riches that nourish all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them.

## 22. Meine Göttin.

Written on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1780 at Kaltennordheim in Thuringia, during a tour with Karl August in the Thuringian Forest, and sent to Frau von Stein.

The poem is throughout allegorical. The poet decides for himself the question which of the immortals shall receive the highest prize by awarding it to Fancy, the spoilt darling of Jove. To us alone of all the inhabitants of the earth does she come, we alone can by her aid raise ourselves above the shifting caprice of the moment.

Yet high as he places her the poet does not forget her *elder sister*, Hope, whom he would gladly have as a companion and comforter till the end of his days.

l. 7 *Tochter Jovis*. Jupiter himself is represented here as half human, and himself, like his daughter, of humorous moods.

l. 17—23. These lines represent Fancy in an Anacreontic mood, i. e. from the light idyllic side.

l. 18. *Lilienstengel*, frequently employed as the symbol of innocence.

l. 20. *Sommervögel*, a specially South German word for *butterfly*. The butterfly often appears as the messenger of fancy.

l. 24—33. Here we have a Northern Ossianic fancy, very different from the preceding mood.

l. 48—58. Man alone can by his imagination make himself independent of the moment, live in a world unassailable by the changing circumstances of the hour.

l. 52. *wandeln und weiden, roam in search of food.*

l. 61. *vergärtelt*: she is spoilt and capricious, and is not therefore capable of governing by her reason, but must be loved with the love of an honoured wife to whom the whole life is devoted.

l. 67—70. Wisdom must not be allowed to handle her too roughly, but must spare her the over-practical conclusions of cold reason and common sense.

l. 71. *Schwester*. Hope is called the sister of Fancy, for without her Fancy would never have the heart to live on in her dreams; cf. Schiller's beautiful poem Hoffnung (1797).

### 28. Grenzen der Menschheit.

A religious Ode, and therefore properly speaking a Hymn. The time of its composition is unknown, but it was probably written somewhere about 1780, and in any case during the Weimar time. In it we see already less of Storm and Stress, less Titanism, and more moderation and resignation. There is no longer the restlessness and impatience of all restraint of the earlier Odes, but the twofold limitation of humanity is fully recognised. In the first place man set midway between heaven and earth must ever remain an incomplete being. If he tries to raise himself to the sublime and to vie with the Gods, he leaves the solid ground of actuality and loses himself in vague ideal speculations; if on the other hand he confines himself to earth and a narrow practical life he cannot even then attain an inner harmony and a perfection equal to that of the oak or the vine.

His second limitation is that of time; his short life is but as one wave of the sea that rolls ever past the impassive Gods, or as one ring in the endless chain which forms their life.

With this poem might be compared the *Barzentsied*; *Iphigenie IV*, 5: „*Es fürchte die Götter || Das Menschen Geschlecht!*” etc.

l. 1—10. The whole mood is evoked by a thunder-storm.

l. 3. *gelassen*, *calm*, *impassive*, was a favourite word of Goethe at this time. It is especially frequent in *Iphigenie*.

l. 7—8. This image is obviously of biblical origin.

l. 15—16. Cf. Horace: Odes, Book I, 1: *sublimi feriam sidera vertice*.

l. 21—24. The idea is finely suggested here of the realist, standing four-square upon the earth, robust though un-ideal and imperfect.

l. 31. *viele*, a case of *Litotes*, or stating less than is actually meant.

## 24. Das Göttliche.

The time of the origin of the poem is not known, though it is probably to be ascribed to the early eighties. It first appeared in the *Tiefurter Journal*, a manuscript journal circulating privately in Weimar court circles, though the date of the number in which it appears cannot be with certainty decided.

The whole, which is one of the noblest of Goethe's poems, treats of the divine, of the gods as we are capable of conceiving them with our human faculties, and contains therefore an entirely anthropomorphic conception of divinity. As man's noble moral qualities distinguish him from all the rest of creation, so we must conceive the gods as possessing in an infinitely higher degree all the excellences of the noblest men. The most divine thing in man is the altruistic impulse to work for the good and welfare of others, and thus he brings the saving influence of will and soul into

what would be otherwise a blind chaos of instinct and fate.

l. 1—2. *Ebel* describes the mood, *hülfreich* the actions, while with *gut* Goethe would seem to place the dividing line of character in the presence or absence of altruistic thought and action.

l. 5—6. *Wesen*, die wir kennen. The beings we know are opposed to those we can only conceive (*ahnen* v. 9) from the divine we see in man.

l. 12. *unfähigend*, not *unfeeling* in the bad sense, but simply *without feeling*, *impassive*, *gelassen* cf. XXXIII l. 3.

l. 13—24. This thought of the impassivity, the cold indifference of nature, is further developed. Nature is not moral but elemental.

l. 25. *Glied* is here used in the sense of *Schicksal*. Fate too is indifferent and exercises no discriminating will.

l. 27. *bes Knaben lockige Unschuld*, *the locks of the innocent boy*, i. e. *the innocent curly-headed boy*. For another case of this rhetorical figure, known as *hypallage*, cf. Auf Wiederg's Tod No. 27 ll. 188—189: *der Narzisse Licht und etter Tulpen Pracht*.

l. 31. *ehernen*, *brazzen* i. e. *unalterable*, *irresistible* — a Homeric epithet (*χάλκεος*).

l. 37. *das Unmöglichste*, what would be otherwise or for others impossible. He can discriminate, choose and judge, and so can raise himself above the moment, and give it permanence.

l. 46—47. Man by his will seizes the changing manifestations and phenomena of life and gives them sequence and unity.

l. 51. *täten im großen*. Once again we have, clearly expressed, the idea of an anthromorphic divinity, which is all the best in man in a higher degree.

l. 54. In these words the opening idea is repeated with a difference, for now it is declared in what consists the nobility of man, namely in helpfulness and goodness, and in restless activity for the common good.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Under the heading *Vermischte Gedichte* Goethe has grouped over seventy pieces of various character, including a number of poems which we have singled out and treated separately under the title of Odes (See Nos. 18—24).

The short humorous couplet with which Goethe prefaced the *Vermischte Gedichte* in 1814, and which runs as follows:

„Wie so bunt der Gram gewesen,  
Musterkarte, gib's zu lesen!"

indicates sufficiently the varied character of the collection, in which insignificant youthful efforts stand side by side with some of his noblest poetical productions.

Although it has been our endeavour to pick out the *Musterkarten* and offer them to the reader, the space at our disposal has prevented us from including a number of beautiful poems, which we recommend the student of Goethe to read in the complete works. Such are the fragment *Der ewige Jude* (1774), in the manner and metre of the greatest *Meisterländer*, Hans Sachs; *Die Geheimnisse* (1784—1785), also unfinished, an attempt at a great religious and philosophic epic, of which Herder was to be the central figure; *Bei Betrachtung von Schiller's Schädel* (1826), the only poem of Goethe written in Terzinen; *Adler und Taube* (1774), in which the leading idea is that a man richly gifted by nature can find no satisfaction in the narrow limits of everyday life; *Lilis Bark* (1775), in which Lili's numerous admirers are compared to a menagerie.

### 25. Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung.

This poem was composed in the interval between the 24<sup>th</sup> of March and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1776 in honour of Hans Sachs (1494—1576), the shoemaker-poet of Nüremberg and the greatest of the *Meistersinger*. Goethe had felt for Hans Sachs the liveliest interest ever since the Strassburg days, owing to his intercourse with Herder, who influenced him to turn from French authors and French taste to those periods of the world's literature in which the strong and uncorrupted voice of nature could be discerned, directing his attention especially to the Bible, Homer, Popular Poetry, Shakespeare, and the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, with its free and active spirit of enquiry and its valiant struggle against intellectual slavery. It was this interest he felt in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century which made him turn to Hans Sachs, whose dry humour and naturalness raise him head and shoulders above the rimers of the artificial school of the *Meistersinger*. Talking of the uncertainty which reigned with regard to versification in the seventies of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Goethe has indicated his position to the old master in an interesting passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> Book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: „Um einen Boden zu finden, worauf man poetisch fußen, um ein Element zu entdecken, in dem man freisinnig atmen könnte, war man einige Jahrhunderte zurückgegangen, wo sich aus einem chaotischen Zustande ernste Tüchtigkeiten glänzend hervortaten, und so freundete man sich auch mit der Dichtkunst jener Zeiten. Die Minnesänger lagen zu weit von uns ab; die Sprache hätte man erst studieren müssen, und das war nicht unsere Sache; wir wollten leben und nicht lernen. Hans Sachs, der wirklich meisterliche Dichter, lag uns am nächsten. Ein wahres Talent, freilich nicht wie jene Ritter und Hof-

männer, sondern ein schlichter Bürger, wie wir uns auch zu sein rühmten. Ein didaktischer Realismus sagte uns zu, und wir benützten den leichten Rhythmus, den sich willig anbietenden Reim bei manchen Gelegenheiten. Es schien diese Art so bequem zur Poesie des Tages, und deren bedürftnen wir jede Stunde".

We have already given the poems and plays in which Goethe has imitated the old master, not only in verse, but also in style and manner. In the *Poetic Mission of Hans Sachs* he may be said to have placed the crown on all his past efforts and once for all to have resuscitated his famous predecessor for his contemporaries.

Goethe feigns to have before him a wood-engraving representing the poetic mission of Hans Sachs, and to give an explanation of it. A poem explaining a wood-engraving was quite common in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century and is in keeping with the whole character of the period. (Cf. Hans Sachs' poem on Luther: *Die Wittembergisch Nachtidigall* || *Die man jetzt höret überall*; Kinzel's *Auswahl*, p. 24).

It is more than probable that Goethe got several motives for the present work from a poem of Sachs himself, entitled: *Gespräch, die neun Gab der Muse oder Kunstmutter betreffend* (cf. Kinzel's *Auswahl*, p. 12), in which he relates the visit he received from the nine Muses.

The language, too, is throughout closely modelled on that of the famous Meistersinger (cf. *hält*, l. 15; *Frummeit*, l. 49; *kunterbunt*, l. 63; *Witzung*, l. 68; *wunniglich*, l. 74; *ersicht*, l. 96; *gesyn*, l. 102; *Narret-heiden*, l. 109; *Fürm*, l. 117 etc.), a good number being coined by Goethe in the spirit of his model.

For the metre cf. Introduction II A. page XLVI.

1. 15. *Er hätt* = *er hatte*, in imitation of the old German *hete*, one of the forms of the Imperfect of *haben* (cf. l. 38).

l. 16. *wär* = *war*, by analogy of *hätt*.

l. 21. *täten erfreuen* = *erfreuten*. (cf. the English *did enjoy*). This use of *tät* with the Infinitive for the past tense of a verb was common in the language of the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, but now only survives in poetry and in the dialects. For further cases in this poem cf. l. 66 and l. 107. *Tät* in these paraphrases is not a subjunctive but represents the old German reduplicative preterite; O. H. G. *teta*, M. H. G. *tete* (cf. Legende No. 31 l. 61: *tät'ſt du dich regen*; Der König in Thule No. 34 l. 23: *Die Augen täten ihm ſinken*).

l. 28. *ſcharzenzen, ogle*.

l. 29. *Mafßstab*, as a sign of *Mafßhaltung*.

l. 30. The *Gürtel* signifies *Bucht und Anſtand*.

l. 30. *gülben* is the correct etymological form from O. H. G. *guldin*, which becomes in classical M. H. G. *gülden*. It has survived in poetry (cf. Der Erlkönig No. 36 l. 12: *Meine Mutter hat manch gülben Gewand*, and Schiller's Piccolomini l. 2056).

l. 33. *tätig Ehrbarkeit*, i. e. der *echte Bürgersinn*, der sich im Leben durch tüchtiges Wirken bewährt (Dünzter).

l. 34. *Großmut* = *Großherzigkeit*.  
*Rechtfertigkeit* = *Rechtſchaffenheit*.

l. 27. *ſchwenz* (*ſchwänzen*), more commonly *ſchwänzeln*.

l. 36. *drob* = *darob* = *darüber*. The word *ob* (gen. or dat.) in the sense of *über* is now antiquated. This old meaning of *ob* is preserved in a few compounds, e. g. *Obhut*, *Obbach* etc.

l. 42. *beginnen, do*. In older German *beginnen* has often this meaning, the idea of beginning passing into that of acting. Cf. the modern use of *ansfangen*.

l. 45. *bärmlich* = *erbärmlich*.

l. 46. *ſchwankweis*, i. e. *durch gute Laune*.

l. 46. *fürtragen* = *vortragen*. In older German *für* and *vor*, which are derived from the same root, were frequently interchanged. *Für* instead of *vor* still occurs in a few common phrases: *Tag für Tag*, *Mann für Mann*, *Schritt für Schritt*: cf. *für Freude*, Ballade No. 43 l. 32.

l. 48. *ſchlicht* und *ſchlecht*. The original meaning of *slecht* i. e. *straight*, *simple* (cf. Luther's Catechism: *Die Läufe ist nicht allein ſchlecht Wasser*), which is synonymous with that of its doublet *ſchlicht*, is here preserved. It still has that meaning in the ordinary every-day expression *ſchlecht*

und *refft*, *purely and simply*, and in the adverb *schlechterdings*, *simply*. The modern meaning of *schlecht* (bad) is a later development: what was *simple* appeared *insufficient*, hence *bad* — an instance of the common deteriorating tendency of words.

l. 49. *Frummheit*, *excellence, goodness*. The modern meaning of *frumm* (= *pious*) is post-Lutheran. The old adjective *frum* meant *useful, excellent, brave*, a meaning which it has kept in part in the verb *frommen* (= *nützen*), and in the tautological phrase *zu Rüg und Frommen*, *for the advantage of*, in which both nouns are datives of the singular.

l. 51—52. The words *verhindert*, *verwöhnt* and *vergiericht* were coined by Goethe. They are all three cases of the past participle used elliptically as an imperative: Cf. *Hermann und Dorothea* No. 46 l. 31: *Noch einmal getrunken!*

l. 54. Albrecht Dürer (1471—1528), born and died at Nüremberg, one of the most famous painters of the Old German School, is mentioned here both because he was a native of the same town as Hans Sachs, and because his artistic work may be said to be inspired by much the same spirit as the poetry of his fellow-townsman. Like Hans Sachs he chose mostly biblical subjects, notably Adam and Eve, his favourite theme.

l. 60. *Weben*, here in the sense of *to busy oneself*, very much the same as *treiben* (l. 61). It is especially used with that meaning in the alliterative phrase *leben und weben*, as in *Gesfaßt*: No. 26 l. 13.

l. 63. *funterbunt* = *bunt durcheinander, verworren*.  
*tollert* = *sich in Tollheiten bewegen* (Strehlke).

l. 64. *tollert* = *tollern, rollen* (ibid.).

l. 67. *auf Erden* is one of the expressions of Modern German in which the old weak feminine declension survives. Cf. *Abschied und Willkommen* No. 2 l. 29. Note.

l. 68. *Witzung*, *lesson*, probably coined by Goethe.

l. 74. *wunniglich* = *wonntiglich*. The changing of *u* and *ü* to *o* and *ö* before nasals began in the M. H. G. period and was due to Middle German dialect influence.

l. 81—82. An allusion to Hans Sachs' comedy: "Die ungleichen Kinder Eve, wie sie Gott der Herr arret" (1553), in which God the Father, who is announced by a herald, examines Cain and Abel and their ten brothers on the ten-

commandments, the Paternoster etc., according to Luther's catechism. The piece represents the consequences of a good and bad bringing-up.

l. 83. In the tragedy of *Die Schöpfung, der Sündenfall und die Austreibung Adams aus dem Paradies* Hans Sachs depicts the woe and misery which disobedience to God brings on man.

l. 84. Likewise an allusion to a drama of Hans Sachs.

l. 85—88. The *Ehrenspiegel der zwölf durchlauchtigen Frauen* represents the twelve cardinal virtues in the person of twelve of the most famous women of the Old Testament, whereas the *Schanzenport der zwölf Tyrannen* tells of the *würtige Leben und erschredlichen Untergang* of an equal number of Old Testament Kings from Pharaoh to Antiochus, *for the comfort of all Christians who are under the yoke of the bloodthirsty Turk and other tyrants.*

l. 90. In the farce *Sankt Peter mit der Geis* (1557), one of the most famous farces of the old Nüremberg master, Christ hands over to this apostle, who thinks he can keep much better order on earth, the government of affairs for one day, but St. Peter is so much worried from morning till evening about an old woman's goat that he prays the Lord to forgive him his folly and relieve him of his functions. A counterpart of this famous farce is Goethe's *Legende vom Huseijen*, No. 31.

l. 91. *Regiment, rule, government*, is the word used by Sachs himself (cf. Kinzel's *Auswahl* of the works of Sachs p. 95, l. 29).

l. 96. *ersicht* = *ersieht*.

l. 99. *eignet i. e. zu eigen macht*.

l. 102. *gesyn* = *gewesen*.

l. 108. *hofieren, dance*.

l. 110. *Zwischenspiel, interlude*.

l. 111—112. Notice that Goethe adds an *n* to *Kleine* to rime with the old weak dat. fem. *Leinen* (cf. l. 67) He could of course have written *Leine*, in which case no addition would have been necessary, but no doubt he thought the present reading was more in the spirit of Sachs, who allows himself great liberties in dealing with rime.

l. 114. *trumb* (= *trumm*) and *dumb* (= *dumm*), in imitation of XVI<sup>th</sup> century German, the *b* being later assimilated to the *m*. Cf. O.H.G. *lamb* and English *lamb*,

though the assimilation has taken place in pronunciation only in the English word.

l. 117. *Fürm* is the plural of *Furm*, and is equivalent to *Arten*, *Unarten*. In his farce, *Das Narrenbad*, to which Goethe here refers, Sachs employs the expression *Unfurm*, which we find in a letter of Goethe to Frau von Stein, April 7, 1780: *Umgeben von Pylades, dem Unfurm.*

l. 118. *Treibt sie ins Bad.* This is a direct allusion to the above-mentioned farce, *Das Narrenbad*, in which a doctor of Milan cures madmen by dipping them in a stinking pool in his yard, more or less deeply according to the strength of the disease.

l. 118. *schneidt ihnen die Würm.* A reference to the Carnival play, *das Narrenschneiden*, which represents a doctor who after cutting open the patient's stomach draws out of it one after another a whole row of madmen, and finally a whole nest of them, and thus cures the patient. Follies are here pictured by Goethe as *worms* because the latter were supposed to cause madness.

l. 124. *Schwäll* (*schwollen*) is used in German to denote any large mass of agitated things, such as surging waves, rushing and roaring waters, billows. Here it might be translated by *throng*, *multitude*. Cf. *Bauberlehring* No. 40 l. 13.

l. 129. Cf. the appearance of Poetry in *Bueignung* (Strophe 4, 5 sqq.).

l. 146. Hans Sachs' first wife was Kunigunde Kreuzberger, whom he lost after a union of forty years, and whose loss he lamented in the *Wunderlicher Traum von seiner lieben Gemahlin Kunigunde Sachs*, though he was married again only four months after to Barbare Harscherin, a young girl of seventeen.

l. 181. The *Eidkrantz* and not the *Verbeer* is the reward of the middle-class and popular poet Hans Sachs.

l. 183—184. *verbannt* is best explained as an Imperative (cf. ll. 51—52), though some prefer to construe: *sie (die Nachwelt) verbannt all das Volk.*

## 26. *Seefahrt.*

Written in lines of five strongly accented syllables, in imitation of the epic verse of Servian popular poetry. (Cf. Introduction II A. page XXXVI.)

The poem was composed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 1776. Goethe recalls how his friends before his departure looked forward hopefully to his future activity in Weimar, and how, when the claims of public life and society seemed to obtrude themselves in a degree incompatible with poetic production, he kept his confidence in himself in spite of the advice and admonitions of his anxious friends.

The life which he was leading since his arrival in Weimar (November 1775), the new career to which he was devoting himself, the follies and excesses which evil tongues exaggerated, had made his friends fear for his future. Were they to give up the hopes they had formed for him? Was his genius about to founder in the storm? Advice, prayers and reproaches were addressed to him, but Goethe was convinced that experience is the best school for forming character; standing at the rudder he bravely faces waves and storm, and whether he founder or land he trusts his gods.

1. 1. The comparison of life to a sea-voyage is a favourite one with Goethe. We find it in the first sketch of Götz (1771); in a letter to Herder (July 1772), in another to Kestner (March 1773): „Wie's mit euch jetzt fracht nach Weise des Landenden Kahn's, so stürmt's und tracht's in der Flotte, in der ich diene. Mein eigen Schiff lämmert mich am wenigsten". Again in March 1776 he wrote from Weimar to Lavater, a few months before the composition of *Seefahrt*: „Ich bin nun ganz eingeschiff auf der Woge der Welt — voll entschlossen zu entdecken, gewinnen, streiten, schettern oder mich mit aller Ladung in die Luft zu sprengen." The image also occurs frequently in his plays, though it is nowhere so completely developed as in the present poem.

*Lange Tag' und Nächte* etc. Goethe refers here to the misunderstandings and delays which preceded his departure for Weimar. It had been arranged in October 1775 between Karl August and Goethe that the latter should start on the journey to the ducal capital in company with the Kammerjunker von Kalb, as soon as the

latter could procure a carriage which had been left behind, but day after day passed without Kalb putting in an appearance. Finally uncertainty and disappointment impelled Goethe to start on a journey to Italy which he had already planned. He departed for the South on the 30th of October, but had only reached Heidelberg when he was caught up by a messenger, who explained the delay and prevailed upon him to return.

1. 2. *Harren* has here its full force of *to await with impatience*; cf. *Der getreue Edart* No. 42 l. 33.

I. 5. *Doppelt* = in außerordentlichem Grade. Goethe is fond of the intensive use of this word. Cf. *Hermann und Dorothea* VI, 51, where he speaks of the bittere Verlust der doppelt betrogenen Hoffnung, and *Der Fischer* No. 35 l. 20—21: *Kehrt willensamend ihr Gesicht || Nicht doppelt schöner her?* Lines 6 sqq. are words of farewell spoken by Goethe's friends present at his departure.

1. 7. die hohe Fahrt. The journey is called *hoch* because its aim is *lofty* and *weighty*. So in the *Ribelungenlied* I l. 356: *Sit si der höhen verte heten nu gegert*. Cf. *Legende* No. 31 l. 9: *Die höchsten Lehren*.

1. 8. in den Welten, i. e. in distant foreign lands.

1. 9. Wird Rückkehrndem . . . die, i. e., wenn du zurückkehrst, so wird dir Lieb' und Preis zu teil.

The omission of the article is irregular, but cf. *trunkenen* (*An Schwager Kronos* No. 19 l. 32), and *tändelnden* (*Wanderers Sturmlied*, l. 89). It should also be noticed that *Rückkehren* is for *Zurückkehren*, the simple for the compound, as often in poetry.

1. 9. Wird = es wird.

1. 9. The journey to Weimar was originally intended as a visit merely, and not as a permanent migration.

1. 11. ward's Getümmel, i. e. the ordinary bustle and confusion attendant on a departure. That is the force of the article.

1. 14. *Segenshauch*, i. e., favourable breeze. Cf. the Homeric *ἴχμενος οὐρανός* and Vergil's *venti ferentes* (*Aen.* 4. 430)

1. 15. The expression *blühen* of the sails is much more poetical than the *blähen* of some editions and has authority on its side, though it means much the same. Cf. again the Homeric *Ἐν δὲ σκυρεμός πρῆσεν μεσον λοτίον*

1. 16. *Feuerliebe* = feurige Liebe.

1. 17. *Biehn* = es ziehn.

l. 20. sqq. In the false anticipation and supposition that the journey would pass off as agreeably as the morning of the day of departure and the last starry nights which they had passed together in the port drinking.

l. 22. *gottgejandte*, according to the ideas of classical antiquity.

l. 23. *vorgestedten Fahrt* = *vorgestedten Bieles der Fahrt*.

l. 32. *Stredt* — *nieder* = *zieht* — *ein*.

l. 33. The ship is entirely at the mercy of the waves, which play with it as with a ball.

## 27. Auf Miedings Tod.

This poem first appeared in April 1782 in No. 23 of the *Tiefurter Journal*, a paper circulated privately in manuscript in the Weimar court circles, and was finished in the beginning of March 1782.

It was written in honour of Johann Martin Mieding, who died on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1782, the factotum of the Weimar theatre, for whose activity and love of work Goethe had always had the greatest admiration. With this eulogy of Mieding Goethe connects the history of the Weimar theatre since his arrival in 1775, and takes advantage of the same opportunity to pay a graceful tribute to the famous actress and singer Corona Schröter (1751—1802), who had lived at Weimar since 1776 and whom Goethe not only admired but with whom he had fallen passionately in love. It was in part lest Frau von Stein should find his admiration for this charming actress excessive that he wrote in excuse on March 11<sup>th</sup>, à propos of this poem, the following lines to Frau von Stein: „Ich habe der Schröter zu Ehren zwölf Verse (169—180) drinne, die Du, hoff

ich, schön finden und in allem Sinne damit zufrieden sein sollst."

The moral of the poem is contained in lines 203—204 of the last strophe, where Corona Schröter advancing throws a crown into the honest Mieding's grave and speaks the following words:

Dir gab ein Gott in holder, steter Kraft  
In deiner Kunst die ew'ge Leidenschaft.

in honour of the man whose ideal had always been his art.

l. 1. Tholens Haus i. e. the theatre. Thalia was the Muse of Comedy only, but here the name is used in a general sense for the Muse of Dramatic Art.

The genitival ending -ens is now obsolete in such words. The modern form is Thaliaß.

l. 4. feiern, here means to *spend inactively*, to *pass idly*. Cf. Feiertag, *holiday*. It is derived from the Vulgar Latin *feria*, from classical Latin *feriae*. The usual meaning of feiern is now to *celebrate*, i. e. a birthday, anniversary etc.

l. 7. Hauenschmidt was the *Rammerdiener* and tailor of the duke of Weimar.

l. 9. Schumann was the court painter.

l. 11. Thiele was the court tailor.

l. 13. Der tätige Sobe. Der tätige Eltan is the earlier reading, which Goethe changed to the present one in the Ausgabe letzter Hand.

l. 14. The Fest alluded to is the birthday of the Duchess Luise, which fell on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, three days after Mieding's death.

l. 17. finnreich schnell is for finnreich und schnell. Goethe is fond of omitting the copula (und) between two adjectives. Cf.:

mit männlich steter Hand (Almenau No. 28 l. 189)

in traurig schönen Jahren (Epilog No. 33 l. 71) etc.

l. 25. Hält Krankheit ihn zurück, so ist es Not, if illness keeps him back, he must indeed be faring badly. In prose one would say: die Sache steht schlimm um ihn.

l. 28. vom Echo. Likewise often used as a feminine substantive.

l. 28. kehrt = kehrt zurück. The use of the simple verb for the compound is of frequent occurrence in poetry.

l. 32. Th<sup>e</sup> Wednesday was the day of the Duchess' birthday, and only the idea that everything must be ready by that date urges Mieding's companions to resume their work in spite of the staggering blow that has been dealt them by the news of his death.

l. 40. O Weimar! . . . wie Bethlehem in Juda, klein und groß! This biblical epithet (cf. Matth. 2, 6) had been applied to Weimar by Wieland, and was probably a *bon mot* current then in court circles about him.

l. 44. By the zwei Extreme Goethe means to imply that by the side of lofty nobility, coarseness and vulgarity also existed at the ducal court. Cf. the lines 56–58 in Jímenau, written the year after, where Goethe reproducing his vision of himself and his early companions writes:

Sie sind es selbst, wo nicht ein gleich Geschlecht.  
Unbändig schwelgt ein Geist in ihrer Mitten,  
Und durch die Höhheit fühlt' ich edle Sitten.

l. 45. du refers to the town of Weimar personified as a woman.

l. 50. von ew'ger Nacht = von Vergessenheit.

l. 63. Du, Staatsmann etc. This refers to no special statesman, but to all who may find a lesson in Mieding's life.

l. 70–72. He it was who let many a day slip by in spite of all entreaties of author and actor, and then at last when the time had come entrusted the fortune of the piece to slender threads.

l. 74. Es war gepodht, refers to the signal given by the Hofmarschall for the beginning of the play.

l. 79. Doch auch ein Böd macht ihm kein graues Haar, a blunder even did not turn his hair grey i. e. did not worry him over much. For the explanation of Böd in the sense of blunder, bull cf. Borchardt: Sprichwörtliche Redensarten p. 74.

l. 87. schöne Seele here appears to be a translation of the French *bel esprit*.

l. 98. Goethe himself in a note points to the use by himself in the Triumph der Empfindsamkeit of the expression Naturmeister, *directeur de la nature*.

l. 105. regt = erregt. Cf. line 28.

l. 107. Ehrenmann here does not mean *man of honour*, but corresponds to the French *bonhomme*. The Ehrenmann is eager to get the post for what he can make out

of it, but unlike Mieding, he does not care an iota for his art.

l. 127 sqq. These lines refer to the strolling companies which played in booths; they still existed up to Goethe's time, as we can read in *Wilhelm Meister*.

l. 137. *Als euren Tempel grause Glut verheert*. In 1774 the Weimar Theatre was burnt down. After this date plays were acted mostly in the ducal castles of Tiefurt, Belvedere and Ettersburg.

l. 140. *Rauhjävert* i. e. *play*.

l. 142. The audience would include Duke Karl August, the Duchesses Amalia and Luise, Frau von Stein, Musaeus, Wieland etc. — truly a critical audience and one hard to please.

l. 146. Plays were occasionally performed on an open stage in the parks of the castles, as, for example, in the case of the *Gischederin*, which was first produced at Tiefurt.

l. 149—152. A reference to *Hanswurst* and the *Narren*, banished by Gottsched.

l. 153—154. Goethe is here alluding to the *Schattenspiele* or *Chinesische Stüde*, as they were called, played behind a transparent curtain and accompanied by an explanatory prologue and by music, such as Seckendorff's *Spiel vom König Midas*.

l. 155. *Im Pössenpiel regt sich die alte Zeit*. Puppet plays like Goethe's *Fahrmärktfest zu Plundersweilern*, which was played by the court at Ettersburg.

*By die alte Zeit* is meant the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the period of Hans Sachs when these plays were especially in vogue.

l. 157. Not only German plays were offered to the critical Weimar audience, but numerous translations from French and English were undertaken for their benefit, notably by Goethe himself, who translated Voltaire's *Mahomet* and *Tancred*, and by Schiller who turned some of Picard's works into German.

l. 152. *Häufen* and not *Häuse* is the usual modern form.

l. 164. An allusion to the dramatic poem *Epiphania*, composed by Goethe in 1781 and performed before the court of Weimar by Corona Schröter and two other performers.

l. 165—166. Another allusion to Corona Schröter, but this time in the character of *Iphigenie* (*Dianens Priesterin*)

which she played in the prose version (1779) of Goethe's tragedy of *Sphingente auf Lauris*.

- l. 181. *gesäßig* = *anmutig, graceful and pleasing*.
- l. 182. She cannot help looking beautiful, although her beauty is quite unconscious.
- l. 188—189. For *hypallage* cf. Note to No. 24 l. 27.
- l. 190. *von Mädelnhand geschickt hervorgebracht* i. e. *artificial*. At Bertuch's factory in Weimar many girls were employed in the making of artificial flowers.
- l. 194. *Porbeerspige*. He too deserved the laurel, even if but modest to match his fame.
- l. 204. cf. l. 65. *Mit Lust zum Werke mehr als zum Gewinn*.
- l. 211—212. A reminiscence of the Latin: *sit tibi terra levis*.

## 28. Ilmenau.

The poem takes its name from the small village of Ilmenau, which consisted then of about 360 houses, and lies in an charming valley at the foot of the Thüringer Wald.

It was written in celebration of the young duke's birthday (3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1783), at Ilmenau, where Goethe was taking a few days' rest, and sent on probably to Gotha where the duke was spending his birthday. We know from a letter to Frau von Stein (August 30<sup>th</sup>) that it was the poet's intention to celebrate the occasion in some such way: „Wenn es möglich ist, schreibe ich dem Herzog ein Gedicht auf seinen Geburtstag.“

In this beautiful poem Goethe recalls the follies and errors of Karl August's youth and his own, the first wild years in Weimar, prior to the Second Journey to Switzerland (1779) from which the young duke returned a saner and more serious man. He can do so with the calm of a stranger and without giving offence because he

has succeeded in dissipating the mist which surrounded him and also because he is aware that his protector is resolutely engaged upon a new life of moderation and self-restraint. He exhorts him to persist in that path and to seek happiness and glory in the welfare of his subjects.

The frankness of Goethe's exhortations and the love of his master which pervades the whole poem shew us the beautiful relation that existed between the poet and his patron and does honour to them both. As the venerable critic Dünzter says: „*Ehre dem Dichter, der in dieser Weise seinen Fürsten zu beglückwünschen wagte, und Ehre dem Fürsten, der bei reiferer Lebensführung sich so an seine ungestümen, drangvollen Jugendjahre erinnern und zur strengsten Erfüllung seiner Pflichten mahnen ließ*“.

Probably on account of the personal and intimate character of the poem it was not included in Goethe's works till 1815.

1. 1. sqq. Compare the opening lines of Goethe's *Iphigenie*, and of the well-known poem of Kleist, *der Frühling*.

1. 5. am Tag der Lieb' und Lust, i. e. the birthday of Karl August (born on the 3rd of September, 1757).

1. 7. mit wechselndem Gefüld. Goethe had passed there days of joy and merriment, but also of earnest and anxious effort to improve the lot of the villagers.

1. 8. *Erhabner Berg* is the *Gidelhahn* or *Kidelhahn*, the highest mountain near Ilmenau. It was in the small wooden hut on its summit that he wrote the famous *Wandrers Nachtid* (No. 12).

1. 9. *sächte* = *sanft ansteigenden*.

1. 10. Goethe hints at the happy state of things foreshadowed in the concluding lines of the poem, and soon to be realized at Ilmenau by the re-opening of the mines (1784), at which he officially presided as head of the *Bergwerkskommission*.

1. 11. mit i. e. as the duke's servant.

1. 12. Ich *fürge* still refers rather to Goethe's anxiety

about the mines than to his more general activity as a minister of Karl August.

l. 16. Goethe was quite conscious of the harm done to the farmers by the ravages of game. He had already written to the Duke on that subject. cf. also *Hägreise im Winter*. No. 21 l. 57 sqq.

l. 17. *Der Knappe* = der Bergmann i. e. miner.

l. 22. alte Reime i. e. alte Lust zu reimen, and not the insertion of rimes (verses) which he had previously composed and inserted here, as some critics say.

l. 23. *Mir wieder selbst* i. e. mir wieder selbst (gegeben)!

l. 28. *Nacht und Dämmerung* is a case of the figure of speech called *hendiadys*, frequent in poetry. It is equivalent to nächtlicher Dämmerungschein, or to dämmerndes Dunkel.

The vision which is described by Goethe in ll. 29—155 is the reproduction of an episode of the early Weimar days which actually took place. It is the picture of a night-scene after a hunting-party in the mountains.

l. 31. *seltnie* = seltsame, Befremden erregend.

l. 32. *wechselnd* = abwechselnd.

l. 34. *Ruf* in this sense is a sporting term.

l. 36. sqq. *Gelag* is not to be taken here in the usual sense of *banquet*, but as equivalent to *Lagerung* or *gelagerte Gesellschaft*.

Compare Goethe's description to Eckermann: „Wir hatten uns am Fuße eines Felsens kleine Hütten gebaut und mit Tannenreisern gedeckt, um darin auf trockenem Boden zu übernachten. Vor den Hütten brannten mehrere Feuer, und wir Kochten und brieten, was die Jagd gegeben hatte!“

l. 41 sqq. Cf. again the Gespräche mit Edermann (23. 10. 1828): „Knebel . . . ergözte die Gesellschaft mit allerlei trockenen Späßen, während die Weinflasche von Hand zu Hand ging“.

l. 45. *wunderbar*. Instead of the usual court-dress Goethe and his companions wore the Werther costume — high boots, blue coat, and yellow waistcoat — which was then the fashion in the immediate entourage of the young duke.

l. 47. An allusion to the wilde Jagd of Wodan and his followers. The priests of early Christianity had turned the old heathen god into an evil spirit who could never rest.

l. 51. *Egypter* = Gigeuner (*gypsies*). It is obviously a translation of the French, *les Egyptiens*.

l. 52. An appropriate comparison with Shakespeare's *As you like it* (Act 2 Sc. 1), where the exiled duke is introduced with his hunting companions in the Ardennes.

l. 53—54. The Originalgenies of the wild period of Storm and Stress were fond of identifying themselves with Shakespeare's characters.

l. 57—58. In their extravagance and wantonness genius shews itself and in spite of their coarseness they possess *distinction* of manner.

l. 59—76. According to Goethe's own explanation in the *Conversations with Eckermann* (23. 10. 1828) the person described in lines 59—68 is Major von Knebel. The description however does not tally with his personal appearance or his character, neither was he aus altem Heldenstamme, his title of nobility only dating back to his father. His fondness for tobacco (l. 63) is the only point which agrees with facts, and seems to have caused the error, though it should not be forgotten that Goethe's conversation on that point with Eckermann took place forty-five years after the composition of the present poem. Thus the reference in ll. 59—68 must remain doubtful.

In the same passage Goethe identifies the person described in ll. 69—76 as the poet and composer Seckendorff, though the description is evidently meant for Knebel. If there were any doubt on that point ll. 73—76 are decisive, for though Seckendorff did write poetry, his verses are all of a light trifling character, whereas in Knebel's *Sammlung kleiner Gedichte* (Leipzig, 1815, anonymously) we find a whole series of Hymns to the Sun, to Selene, to the Earth, all in hexameters, which explains the expressions *himmelhohen Sphären* und *monotones Lied* (ll. 75—76) used by Goethe. Thus we come to the conclusion that ll. 59—68 apply to some unknown person and ll. 69—76 to Knebel.

l. 60. *Nachlässig stark* = in nachlässiger Haltung trotz seines fräftigen Büchses.

l. 60. *drückt* = senkt. cf. *Der getreue Edart* No. 42 l. 7 where the verb is used reflectively.

l. 70. *Sturz* = Stamm. One would expect rather *auf den Sturz eines alten Baumes*.

l. 71. *feingestalt*. This is a case of so-called Rüdumlaut, a term used by Grimm to indicate that owing to the early disappearance of *i* or *j* after a long vowel the Umlaut

did not take place in a certain class of verbs and the original vowel was retained. Rückumlaut is especially visible in the Middle High German period, but in the New High German period the preterites and past participles with Rückumlaut were levelled with the present which had Umlaut from the first. Rückumlaut in New High German exists in (1) the so-called semi-irregular verbs: brennen, senden, nennen, wenden, kennen, though analogical forms (sendete, wendete) also occur (2) denken, dünken and bringen and (3) in a few isolated participles, such as gestalt (ungestalt), getrost (adverb), abgetümadt, gefährt etc.

Compare with line 71 the 5<sup>th</sup> strophe of Schiller's *Das elektrische Fest* (1799), where the expression *schöngefasste Glieder* occurs. Also *Faust II*, 1176.

l. 72. *Erläßlich* faul i. e. fond of bodily ease, but of great loftiness of mind.

l. 79. The young Karl August was then in his twentieth year, — in dem düstern Ungestüm seines zwanzigsten Jahres.

In this strophe Goethe appears, but so great is the change that he does not recognize his old self.

l. 86 sqq. Goethe carries on, as he remarked to Eckermann, a conversation with his earlier self: „Das Ilmenauer Gedicht enthält als Episode eine Epoche die, als ich es schrieb, bereits mehrere Jahre hinter uns lag, so daß ich mich selber damit als eine historische Figur zeichen und mit meinem eigenen Ich früherer Jahre eine Unterhaltung führen konnte“.

l. 94. *deinen guten Willen*, i. e., thy *sympathy, comfort, advice*. When Goethe wrote these lines he probably had in mind the letter which Klopstock had addressed to him in his early Weimar days, and which sought to make him responsible for the young duke's intemperate habits and the neglect of his wife. Goethe answered: „Beschonen Sie uns fünftig mit solchen Briefen, lieber Klopstock!“, without however taking the trouble to refute the charges. Thereupon the author of the *Messias* retorted in an insulting epistle, and from that day the two poets became completely estranged.

l. 103. *Grommen* in the sense of *advantage, benefit* is confined to higher style. cf. Epilog No. 33 l. 55.

l. 105. *vergötternd*: cp. in Prometheus No. 20 l. 53 the words: *ein Geschlecht das mir gleich sei*.

l. 108—111. These lines are a self-accusation for the harm done by Werther and other poems of the period of Storm and Stress.

l. 111. Ich schwanke nicht, indem ich mich verdamme,  
*I condemn myself consistently and unwaveringly.*

l. 112—114. A reference to Götz and the early Egmont.

l. 112. unklug i. e. without weighing the consequences.

l. 117. Die arme Kunst, mich künstlich zu betragen, the miserable art of behaving in an artificial manner, like the court-parasites.

l. 118—119. Goethe is guiltless because his intentions were good (cp. l. 108), and guilty at the same time, because his actions and influence were not wholly beneficial (cp. l. 110). Conscious of this he is gebrüllt and gestraft, but beglückt through the duke's friendship and favour.

l. 123. enges Schicksal i. e. the narrowing limitations of his rank as a prince, which impeded the natural free development of his powers. Goethe notes in his Tagebuch (April 1780): „Der Herzog wird täglich besser, nur ist's ein Übel, daß ein Prinz, der etwas angreifen will, nie in die Gelegenheit kommt, die Dinge im Alltagsgang von unten auf zu sehen“.

l. 124. cf. the Prologue of Faust I ll. 86—87:

„Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunkeln Ornage,  
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewußt“.

l. 125. Zauberchatten, i. e., illusions and false opinions acquired from others, with possibly a thought on Goethe's part of the prejudices resulting from Karl August's rank and education.

l. 126—127. It was only the exaggeration of that principle that Goethe blamed, for it was one of the leading principles in his moral creed that no man could be said to possess a thing until he had made it his own by personal exertion. cf. Goethe's letter to Lavater (1780): „Herrlichkeit wird niemand angeboren, und der sie ererbte, muß sie so bitter gewöhnen, als der Erbarter, wenn er sie haben will, und bitterer“, and the proverbial lines from Faust I: „Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen“.

l. 129. Gesang, here = the Latin *carmen*, charm (Zauberstab).

l. 140—141. Vorwitz and Unfall were common personages in mediaeval allegorical poetry. The reference may of course be more directly to the figures of

Fürwittig and Unfalo in Teuerbank, as von Loeper surmises.

l. 151. In reference to ll. 140—151, which Goethe quotes in Eckermann, the poet says: „So war er ganz und gar. Es ist darin nicht der kleinste Zug übertrieben. Doch aus dieser Sturm- und Drangperiode hatte sich der Herzog bald zu wohltätiger Klarheit durchgearbeitet, so daß ich ihn zu seinem Geburtstage im Jahre 1783 an diese Gestalt seiner früheren Jahre sehr wohl erinnern möchte“.

l. 166. The new life of self-restraint and moderation may be said to have begun with the Journey to Switzerland (1799), which the prince made in company with Goethe, and was considerably furthered by the birth of an heir Apparent (cf. letter to Knebel, 3rd March, 1783).

l. 168. Contrast with the earlier picture of terrified and half-starved peasants. Ilmenau had been in a very poor and disorderly state and Goethe had exerted himself to improve its condition, not only by the re-opening of the mines, but also by restoring the weaving industry, and supplying the temporary wants of the most needy and helpless.

l. 174. *Berbrochen* is a mining expression much affected by Goethe, equivalent to *fallen to ruins* (*verfallen*).

l. 177. Ilmenau is called a *Winkel* because it lay some distance from Weimar in an enclave of the Grand Duchy.

l. 183. On the 2nd of May, 1780 Goethe wrote in his *Tagebuch*: „Niemand als wer sich ganz verleugnet, ist wert zu herrschen und kann herrschen“. cf. Schiller, *Maria Stuart* II, 2 and *Piccolomini* I., 4, 31 sqq.

l. 186. One of Goethe's many biblical images. In allusion to Matthew 13, 3 sqq.

l. 189. *Steter* = fester, in opposition to *schwanzend* (l. 186). cf. Goethe's *Tasso* II, 3, where Tasso praises the statesman Antonio thus: „Auf des Lebens leicht bewegter Woge || Bleibt dir ein stetes Herz“.

l. 190. Karl August was always too anxious to see the immediate fruit of his labours and Goethe often had to exhort him to patience.

## 29. Amor als Landschaftsmaler.

Goethe composed this poem in the beginning of the year 1788, during his stay at Rome. The motive goes back to September or October of 1787 and is due to his acquaintance with the beautiful Roman girl and still more her friend, the fair maiden of Milan, of which Goethe himself gives us the details in the Italian Journey. The main idea is that nature, to which men are sometimes indifferent, becomes clothed in lovely forms and colours when seen through the eyes of love.

This beautiful poem illustrates admirably the fundamental difference between plastic art and poetry, as set forth in Lessing's *Laokoon* (see, chap. XVI), which enjoins that if the poet wishes to depict, he must, instead of giving a description of the object let it develop and grow before our eyes.

The metre is the so-called **SERVIAN METRE**, (cf. Introduction II. A. XXXVII.

1. 1. *Soß ich* = *da saß ich* (*einmal*).

1. 2. There is a by-allusion in this line to the cloudy obscured state of Goethe's mind which prevents him from seeing nature in her true light.

1. 3. *grundieren* i. e. den *Grund*, *worauf das Gemälde aufgetragen wird*, *kunstgemäß* *zubereiten*.

1. 5. Line 62 gives the clue to the fact that Cupid is meant.

1. 7. *gelassen* = *ruhig*, is a word of which Goethe is especially fond in this meaning. cf. *Iphigenie* ll. 830, 1108, 1670 etc.

1. 8. *Hast . . . du wohl*, i. e. *Du hast wohl*.

1. 13. *Kluges* = *Gescheidtes*.

1. 22. *macht er golden* i. e. he represents the edge of the clouds as gilded by the rays of the sunlight.

1. 33. *ein Grünes* i. e. *ein besonders schönes, lebhafteß Grüne*. The indefinite article has here the force of *special, outstanding*.

l. 35. *lafieren* i. e. to coat with transparent colour so that the colour of the background appears through the coating.

l. 36. *fern und ferner* = *ferner und ferner* or *immer ferner*. For this construction which is very common in Goethe's poetry cf. Note *Bueignung* No. I l. 38.

l. 37. *neugeboren* i. e. animated by a new feeling for life and art.

l. 46. Compare Goethe's description of the *Maisänderin* in the *Italian Journey*.

l. 59. *erstaunte* = in *Erstaunen* *segte*.

l. 61. *Geh̄t zu kommen*, *moves or starts to approach*. Probably the construction is influenced by the French *venir* with the infinitive. cf. *Sphigenie* Act I Sc. II l. 99:

„*Kam Thoas dir, als einer Gottgeebnen,  
Mit Ehrfurcht und mit Neigung zu begegnen.*”

### 80. (Karl August.)

Composed (1789) in honour of the Duke of Weimar, and originally meant to be included among the *Roman Elegies*. Subsequently Goethe seems to have found it more suitable for the *Venetian Epigrams*, where it now appears as the 35<sup>th</sup> of the series. From the time of its conception to that of its publication (1800), it underwent several modifications, the chief of which will be briefly pointed out in the notes.

Like the rest of the *Venetian Epigrams* to which it belongs, it is written in distiches of one hexameter and one pentameter. (cf. Introduction II. A. XXXVIII).

l. 1—2. In 1786 the Duchy of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach had only 93,360 inhabitants spread over an area of 36 square miles. The capital Weimar contained 6265 inhabitants and 769 houses.

l. 3. The Duke had made great efforts to establish a confederation of German princes directed against Austria's greed for power.

l. 4. *ein Fest, a joy, pleasure.*

l. 5. *priesest* is potential and equal to *Was könntest du ihn (würdig) preisen?* The same construction occurs in l. 6 (*erschien*).

l. 8. This is a later version; originally (1789) the line read: *Stand, Vertrauen, Gewalt, Garten und Wohnung und Geld. Reigung, favour, friendship.* cf. Schiller, *Wallensteins Tod* I. 7. 130.

By *Felder und Garten* Goethe means his summer-house, bought specially for him by the Duke, into which he moved in April 1776, and by *Haus* his town-residence on the *Frauenplan*, which the Duke only gave him in 1792.

l. 10. Compare Schiller's beautiful poem, *Die Teilung der Erde*, in which the poet is represented as missing, in his ideal striving, the good things of this world, but as finding consolation in the thought that Heaven is always open to him.

l. 11. Goethe had probably in mind when he penned this line a passage of Martial (XI, 3), in which he complains that the *Getes* and *Britons* read his poems, but that his purse remains empty.

l. 12. This line seems to refer generally to the many inward struggles which his verse had cost him, and not, as some critics think, more particularly to *Götz* which he had been obliged to print at his own cost and that of Merck (1773).

l. 13. *mochte i. e. wollte gern.*

l. 14. By the *deranged, distracted guest* we are to understand Werther. The first two French translations of *Werther* appeared in 1776, and the first English one in 1779.

l. 15. In the year 1779 a merchantman from the East Indies landed at Glückstadt in Holstein, the captain of which had in his possession several Chinese pictures representing scenes from *Werther's Leiden*.

l. 17. *frug* is a fairly recent form of the preterite of *fragen* formed on the analogy of *ſchlug, trug* etc. The original form of the preterite is weak: O. H. G. *frägeta*, N. H. G. *fragte*. Although the form *frug* is fairly frequent, *frage* is to be preferred.

## 81. Legende vom Hufeisen.

Probably composed in the spring of the year 1797, and remarkable as a return to the manner and style of the old Meistersinger Hans Sachs, which Goethe had so much affected in the pre-Weimarian period, and which had led to the famous poem on Hans Sachs in the early Weimar days (cf. *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung*, No. 25). After Goethe's return from Italy in 1788, he busied himself almost exclusively with classical forms and subjects, but probably finding that he was losing touch with the German public, and eager also to shew that he had attained his ideal of using side by side the most varied forms according to the promptings of the moment, or, to use his own expression, of *commanding poetry*, he first produced that admirable blending of the antique and Germanic, *Hermann und Dorothea*, and then devoted himself for a time to wholly German subjects such as *Faust I*, the *Ballads* etc. The fact that Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795) had caused him once more to occupy himself with the Bible, as we know from the essay *Israel in der Wüste*, at which he worked in April and May 1797 and which finally appeared in the notes to the *Westöstlicher Divan*, probably explains the choice of subject.

The source of the poem, which especially recalls *Sankt Peter mit der Geiß* (1557), one of Hans Sachs' most famous farces, is uncertain. It may have been suggested by *Eine altdeutsche Heiligenage aus mündlicher Überlieferung wörtlich aufgezeichnet*, which appeared in the second book of Büsching's *Wöchentliche Nachrichten für Freunde der Geschichte, Kunst und Gelahrtheit des Mittelalters*, to the third volume of which Goethe himself contributed. The subject of the Legend in

Büsching bears certainly a great resemblance to that of Goethe's poem, but this would rather point to the fact that the legend is merely a repetition in prose of the present poem. Suspicion, too, is aroused by the fact that not a word is said by the contributor as to where he heard the legend in question.

A reproduction of Büsching's *Altdeutsche Heiligen-sage* can be found in Dünzter's *Erläuterungen zu den deutschen Klassifern* Vol. V. pp. 56, 57.

The metre is the XVI<sup>th</sup> century *Knittelvers* (cf. Introduction II. A. XLVI). We quote the opening lines of Hans Sachs' *Saint Peter mit der Geiß*, to show how admirably Goethe has caught the style and tone of his model, while surpassing him by far:

„Weil noch auf Eiden gieng Christus,  
Und auch mit im wandert Petrus,  
Eins Tags aus eim Dorf mit im gieng,  
Bei einer Wegscheit (sign-post) Petrus anstieng:  
O Herre Got und Meister mein,  
Wich wundert ser der Güte dein,  
Weil du doch Got allmechtig bist,  
Lebt es doch gen zu aller Frist  
In aller Welt gleich wie es get,  
Wie Habafuk sagt, der Prophet:  
Frevel und Gewalt get für Recht,  
Der Gotlos übervorteilt schlecht  
Mit Schalkheit den Gerechten und Frommen,  
Auch können kein Recht zu Ent mer kommen”.

(cf. Kinzel's *Auswahl*, p. 94).

l. 5. *Liebt' er sich.* Lieben with the reflexive pronoun and equivalent in meaning to the simple verb is not uncommon with Goethe.

l. 6. *Straßen*, the weak dative feminine of older German, in keeping with the style of the poem (cf. *Willkommen und Abschied* No. II, l. 29, Note).

l. 9. *hoch* has here the meaning of *weighty*. Cf. *Seefahrt* No. 26, l. 7.

l. 15. *Sah* = *er sah*, with omission of the pronominal subject, as often in popular poetry.

l. 16. *was* (= *war*) is the old German etymologically correct form.

l. 19. *aufgeräumt, good-humoured, of good cheer.*

l. 21. *was*, familiar for *etwas*, especially when followed by a neuter adjective: *was Gutes, was Erfreuliches.*

l. 21. *Regiment, ruling, government.* It is the word used by Sachs himself (cf. *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung* No. 25).

l. 31. *nach seiner Langmut = seiner Langmut nach (according to).*

l. 33. *Und tut auch weiter nicht dergleichen i. e. als ob er deshalb erzürnt sei (Düntzer).*

l. 51. *dahinter her, after it.*

l. 53. *Gaum, more commonly Gaumen.* *Gaum* is the etymologically correct form from M. H. G. *Goume*. The form *Gaumen* is due to the addition of *-n* in the Nominative from the other cases. Such words are numerous; cf. *Balzen, Bogen, Braten, Garten, Tropfen* etc., which in M. H. G. are *Bulke, Boge, Bräte, Garte, Tropfe*.

By the addition of this *-n* these nouns, which belonged to the weak masculine declension, passed to the strong and were declined accordingly.

l. 61. *Läßt du . . . regen = regtest du . . .* For this paraphrase, common in the dialects and in *Volkspoesie*, cf. *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung* No. 25, l. 21, Note.

l. 54. *Raum = Zwischenraum, Zeitraum.*

## 82. Eueignung des Faust.

According to Goethe's *Tagebüch* the *Eueignung* was written on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1797; it was first printed in the first complete edition of Part I in 1808.

It consists of a dedication to the friends of his youth of this work, which appears to him now like a spectre from the mists of the past.

Since the Italian time, when he wrote the *Hexen-*  
*tüche* scene in the Villa Borghese at Rome, up till 1797 when the *Eueignung* was written, Goethe had not occupied himself with *Faust*. In 1790 the *Fragment*

appeared in the 7<sup>th</sup> Volume of his Works, but when Schiller on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1794 wrote asking for the unprinted parts („Aber mit nicht weniger Verlangen würde ich die Bruchstücke von Ihrem Faust, die noch nicht gedruckt sind, lesen; denn ich gestehe Ihnen, daß mir das, was ich von diesem Stücke gelesen, der Torso des Herkules ist“), Goethe answered: „Von Faust kann ich jetzt nichts mitteilen; ich wage nicht das Paket aufzuschneiden, das ihn gefangen hält. Ich könnte nicht abschreiben ohne auszuarbeiten und dazu fühle ich mir keinen Mut. Kann mich künftig etwas dazu vermögen, so ist es gewiß Ihre Teilnahme“.

Already in a letter to Schiller of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, 1797 he writes: „Unser Balladenstudium hat mich wieder auf diesen Dunst- und Nebelweg gebracht“.

The youthful days when he wrote many of the most important parts appear to him now, on taking up the work again, times of dark instinctive striving. Then his productions were those of semi-unconscious creative impulse, as he himself said to Eckermann (*Gespräche mit Goethe*: January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1830): „Der Faust . . . ist doch ganz etwas Inkommensurables, und alle Versuche, ihn dem Verstände näher zu bringen, sind vergeblich. Auch muß man bedenken, daß der erste Teil aus einem etwas dunkeln Gustande des Individuums hervorgegangen“.

But though he had so long felt a disinclination to enter again this world of shadows, now he has once taken the step the past lives again for him, and the pictures of past days and the faces of friends of long ago rise up before him. Those who heard the early songs will, alas! not hear those to come; — if those early hearers still live they are scattered far and wide in the world. Longing seizes him for those far-off days and the friends who shared them

with him; the present grows unreal to him, and he lives once more in the vanished past.

For the metre (*ottava rima*) cf. Introduction II B. p. LVI.

l. 1. *schwankende Gestalten*, *wavering forms*, refers to the chief characters of the early Faust — Faust himself, Mephistopheles, Gretchen etc. — conceived as air-phantoms.

wieder: these *wavering forms* appear again. They had last appeared to Goethe in Italy, where he composed the scene entitled *Walb und Höhle* (1788), and had attempted, but in vain, to take up again the old thread of Faust.

l. 2. *früh*, refers to the beginnings of the Faust idea, the Leipzig times about 1770.

*trüb, clouded.*

l. 4. . noch i. e. in spite of the Italian Journey which had alienated him from the mediaeval and Germanic world of Faust.

*Wahn* has not here its usual meaning of *illusion* or *delusion*, but of *fantastic idea, fancy*, i. e. the early idea or project of dramatizing the Faust-legend.

Compare Schiller's *Piccolomini* l. 2363: „*Doch wahres Unglück bringt der falsche Wahn*“.

This meaning of *Wahn* is common in older German, and is still seen in the compound *Urgwohn* (M. H. G. *arc wān*), *evil idea, hence suspicion*.

l. 5. so mögt ihr walten, then *you may have your way*. The combination *schalten und walten* is more commonly found in this acceptation.

l. 6. *Dunst und Nebel* is a hendiadys for *Nebeldunst*. Goethe had probably in mind the above-quoted letter to Schiller when he penned this line.

l. 7. *jugendlich*, as in my youth, with an allusion principally to the period of Storm and Stress.

l. 8. *By the atmosphere of magic that invests your train*. Cf. Faust I l. 496: „*Bist du es, der von meinem Hauch umwittert, || In allen Lebenstiefern zittert?*“

l. 10—12. Und manche liebe Schatten . . . erste Lieb' und Freundschaft. We can imagine some of the figures that would rise up in Goethe's memory out of those early days — his sister Cornelia, the Frankfort Gretchen, Kätkchen Schön-

kopf, Friederike, Lili, and the many friends of his youth, Merck, Behrisch, Schlosser, Klinger etc.

l. 16. *Güld* is here equivalent to *Schädsal*.

l. 17—18. The friends who heard the early parts of Faust, either dead or lost to sight, will not hear die folgenden *Gesänge* i. e. all the additions since made to the Faust theme and embodied in the completed Part I, to which the present poem is an introduction.

l. 21. *Leib*. Some editions read *Lied* which was only substituted for *Leib* after Goethe's death (from 1837 on). The meaning is *the sorrow which I bewail, my lament* (cf. die *Rüage* l. 13).

l. 21. By die unbekannte *Menge* Goethe means the general public, as opposed to his personal friends.

l. 23. *was, they who*. This is a common use of the neuter sing. pronoun when referring to several persons in a general way.

l. 23. *Lied* in this line refers to the early Faust rather than to Goethe's youthful poems in general.

*erfreuet* = *erfreuet* (*hat*).

l. 25. *Geisterreich*, *spirit-realm*, realm of the departed (friends).

l. 25—32. The tones of the early Faust, which he had not heard for so long, resound in the poet's ear. The strange accents surprise him and awake slumbering memories of the past. A feeling of awe (*Schauer*) comes over him; tear follows tear. The present fades away, and the fantastic phantoms of his youth step forth from the beclouded past.

l. 29. Like the Homeric heroes Goethe did not consider it a sign of weakness to give way to tears under the pressure of great emotion. Cf. *Trost in Tränen*. No. 16, and the concluding lines of No. 56:

*Laßt mich weinen! das ist keine Schande.*

*Weinende Männer sind gut.*

*Weinte doch Achill um seine Briseis!*

*Xerxes beweinte das unerschlagene Heer,*

*Über den selbstgemordeten Liebling*

*Alexander weinte.*

*Laßt mich weinen! Tränen beleben den Staub.*

*Schon grunelt's.*

### 88. Epilog zu Schillers Glorre.

Composed in August of 1805, and published in the Taschenbuch für Damen for the year 1806. Performed as the epilogue to Schiller's Lied von der Glocke on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 1805 at Lauchstedt in memory of Schiller, who had died on May 9<sup>th</sup> of the same year.

Originally Goethe had intended to write a great Totenfeier in honour of his departed friend, in which all kinds of allegorical figures from Schiller's works were to appear, with music by Zeller, but the plan was never carried out. In the earlier version of the present poem (1806) ll. 41—48 and ll. 89—104 were lacking; ll. 41—48 and 89—96 were added on the occasion of the second representation (May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1810) and ll. 97—104 for the third (May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1815).

The poem is written in the eight-line stanza known as *ottava rima* (cp. Introduction II B. p. LVI).

ll. 1 sqq. take up the closing words of Schiller's Lied von der Glocke:

„Sego mit der Kraft des Stranges  
Wiegt die Glock' mir aus der Gruft,  
Daß sie in das Reich des Klanges  
Steige, in die Himmelslust!  
Ziehet, ziehet, hebt!  
Sie bewegt sich, schwebt!  
Freude dieser Stadt bedeute,  
Friede sei ihr erst Geläute“

in which he gave expression to the hope that the Peace of Lunéville might be the signal for a quieter and more peaceful epoch.

1. 2. *segenbar* = *segend*, coined on the analogy of *fruchtbar* etc.

1. 3. *Hochgesang* (*O. H. G. hōchsang*) = *Festgesänge*.

1. 4. *das junge Fürstenpaar*. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1804, the princess Maria Paulowna, daughter of the Czar

Paul, made her triumphal entry into Weimar as consort of the heir apparent, Karl Friedrich of Weimar.

1. 7 sqq. In honour of the occasion Schiller composed the lyric-dramatic poem, *Die Huldigung der Künste*, (performed on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1804) his last important poetic achievement.

1. 8. *Stufen* i. e. of the Court Theatre.

1. 10. Notice the force of *dumpli* as applied to the mournful midnight knell.

1. 9 sqq. The *Huldigung der Künste*, Schiller's swan-song, was followed only too soon by the sad night of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of May 1805 during which his body was lowered into the grave.

1. 19. *anschließend* i. e. geneigt auf die Gedanken anderer einzugehen.

1. 21. *sicherstellig*, also a word coined by Goethe: who knows how to put everything in its right place and easily and quickly finds his bearings; sure of judgment.

1. 22. *Lebensplane*, *principles*. The plural *Plane* is principally found in poetry and elevated diction.

1. 22. *erzeugt* = *borgelegt*.

1. 27. An allusion to Schiller's unsettled state before his coming to Weimar (*sichern Port*), probably with special reference to the wild *Sturm- und Drangperiode*.

1. 30. *Inns Ewige des Wahren* etc. = *ins ewig Wahre* etc.

1. 31 sqq. In this fine passage Goethe pays homage to his deceased friend's idealistic conception of life, which shunned all that was *trivial* and *commonplace* in human nature. It is in this sense that *gemein* should here be taken, and not in that of *morally bad*, *base*, or of *vulgar*. Cf. Schiller's use of the word in this sense in *Wallensteins* famous soliloquy (*Wallensteins Tod* I. 4. 207 sqq.): „Das ganz || Gemeine ist's, daß ewig Gefrigre, || Was immer war und immer wiederlebt || Und morgen gilt, weil's heute hat gegolten!“ and ll. 365 sqq. in Goethe's unfinished epic of Achilleis.

Interesting, too, are Goethe's words to Eckermann (*Gespräche* II. 1827): „Schiller's eigentliche Produttivität lag im Idealen, und es läßt sich sagen, daß er so wenig in der deutschen als in einer andern Literatur seinesgleichen hat.“ Cf. also another passage under the date 11. 9. 28 for the same opinion.

1. 33. *Gartenzinne*. A reference to Schiller's summer-house (*Gartenhaus*) in Jena, which he purchased in the

spring of 1797 and where he worked at Wallenstein and Maria Stuart, and composed some of his finest ballads and also the *Song of the Bell*. The whole line may also contain a side-allusion to Schiller's idealistic standpoint in general.

ll. 33. 40. In the whole strophe Goethe has in mind his friend's philosophic works — *Über Anmut und Würde* (publ'd 1793), *Über das Erhabene* (publ'd 1793), *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (final version publ'd 1795)

ll. 38—40. An allusion to Schiller's habit of working late into the night.

ll. 41—48. Refer to Schiller's historical works which, besides numerous minor essays, consist of two great works — *Geschichte des Absfalls der Vereinigten Niederlande* (1788), and the *Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (begun in 1790).

l. 41 sqq. In reference to Schiller's untiring research in the field of historical tradition, which confuses and thereby renders unrecognizable the blameworthy and the praiseworthy. The historian who is at the same time a poet possesses the touchstone whereby to distinguish the noble from the base (*durchgeprobt*).

Cf. Schiller, Prologue to *Wallenstein*, l. 102:

„*Bon der Parteien Kunst und Hass verwirrt  
Schwankt sein Charakterbild in der Geschichte.*“

l. 41. *Flut auf Fluten* = *Fluten auf Fluten*. It sometimes happens that when two nouns (or adjectives) form but one idea the latter only is inflected. Several examples of this construction occur in Goethe's works and in those of the poets of the earlier eighteenth century. In *Ephigenie* l. 2072 Goethe has „*Tag und Nächten*“; in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Book I: „*das Grab jenes braven, von Freunden und Feinden geschätzten Günther*“.

l. 43. The meaning is that the characters and great events of history appeared to his mind in ever increasing fulness (and clearness). Goethe seems to have in mind Wallenstein and the *Thirty Years War* more especially.

l. 47 sqq. Schiller's research in the field of history and philosophy was followed by a brilliant outburst of song.

l. 49. *rot und röter*, in lieu of the usual *röter und röter* or *immer röter*, is characteristic of Goethe's language cf. *Bueignung* No. I l. 38 Note.

ll 53—56 Not without reference to Schiller's poem: *Worte des Glaubens*.

I. 55. *fromme, may do good, may spread happiness and blessing.* Cf. Simenau No. 28 l. 103. *Frommen* is now only used in higher style, the ordinary prose equivalent being *nützen*.

II. 57—64. The finest fruits of his idealism are his historical creations.

I. 61 sqq. The works alluded to are *Wallenstein* (1799), *Maria Stuart* (1800) *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801), *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), *Tell* (1804).

II. 65—80. The noble strife of his lofty soul with physical suffering, and the sympathy which he found.

II. 67—68. *der Böller Sinn und Sitte* is in apposition to *das dunkle Buch*.

*Das dunkle Buch, the mysterious book* i. e. hard to understand, or possibly *the dark, gloomy book*.

*mit heiterm Blick:* with the calm eye of objectivity.

I. 69 sqq. After the severe illness of the winter 1790—1791 Schiller had continually to struggle against an obstinate chest-complaint which gradually undermined his health.

I. 75. *Wir* i. e. the actors of the theatre and Goethe himself who was manager.

I. 76. *Der Gegenwart, der störenden.* In imitation of Homeric language Goethe often (especially in the epic of *Hermann und Dorothea*) for the sake of greater emphasis places the adjective accompanied by the article after the noun, like an afterthought. Cf. *Die Verge, die scheidenden* (*Alegis und Dora* No. 48 l. 9). *Aus dem Burzurgewölfe, dem schwelenden, immer bewegten* (*Euphrosyne* No. 47 l. 144)

I. 79. *Und noch am Abend vor den letzten Sonnen.* Schiller's last visit to the theatre took place on the 29th of April, 1805, ten days before his death.

I. 81. *das strenge Wort* i. e. the implacable decree that he was only to live a short time longer.

I. 83. The illness from which Schiller had so often recovered proved fatal this time. His friends were so accustomed to his being face to face with death that they had hoped he would come back to them once again from the brink of the grave.

I. 87. Compare Schiller's own words in the *Braut von Messina*, IV. 9. 705 sqq.: „*Der Tod hat eine reinigende Kraft, || In seinem unvergänglichen Palaste || Zu echter Tugend reinem Diamant || Das Sterbliche zu läutern.*

1. 90. Goethe has in mind more especially the Romantic School, which did not give Schiller the praise he deserved.

1. 102. *Das Eigenste* i. e. his ideals.

#### IV. BALLADS.

The word *ballad* is of Romance origin and means properly *dance-song* (Provençal *ballar* = to dance). With the migration of the word from France to England it was applied to a class of poems differing altogether from the Romance ballad which, invented by the Provençal troubadours in the XII<sup>th</sup> century, became in the course of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century purely an artificially constructed poem consisting of three strophes similar in verse and rime, the last line of every strophe being the same and the whole poem ending with an *envoi*, a half-strophe, often omitted, which is addressed generally to the prince of a *pui* or literary guild.

In Germanic literature the word ballad is applied to poems of essentially popular origin, which have existed from the first, although in so far as German is concerned the word ballad is comparatively recent. It was introduced by Bürger, who probably took it from Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), a collection of old heroic ballads, songs and other pieces of our earlier poets, which was destined to have a profound influence on German as well as English poetry. After the adoption of the word ballad by Bürger it was used indiscriminately by German poets, as synonymous with *romance*, and may be said to have continued to be so used till our day. Goethe himself at first used the title *Balladen und Romanzen*, and it was only in the third edition of his works that he omitted the word *Romanzen*. It cannot be denied that the two often

merge, but at the same time it is quite possible and desirable to point out roughly the differences between the two species. The Ballad is a lyric-dramatic song, a living representation of things, written in picturesque popular and compact language, dealing with serious mystical and gruesome subjects. The Romance, on the other hand, can be described as an epic-narrative poem, written in sustained and elevated language, dealing with romantic subjects, and affecting a high moral ideal. A second and simpler classification will follow from a discussion of the history of the Ballad and Romance.

The Ballad was extensively cultivated in early times by all Germanic races, like all other branches of popular poetry. We find historical ballads in the Old High German period (cf. the *Hildebrandslied*, c. 800, and the *Ludwigslied*, 881—882). In the middle period the Ballad languished and practically died out with the great wars. Later, towards the end of the XVII<sup>th</sup> and during part of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, it fell into the hands of the ballad-mongers or *Bänkelsänger*, as they were called, who used to sing at fairs their accounts of harrowing deeds of murder and treachery to doleful and monotonous melodies.

Theoretically it was the great German critic Herder (1744—1803) who revived the Ballad by calling attention to Bishop Percy's *Reliques* in his treatise *Über Ossian und die Lieder der alten Völker*, and by translating into German a few of these old English ballads himself; but the real founder of the Modern German Ballad is Gottfried August Bürger (1747—1794), whose *Leonore* appeared in 1773, and marks the beginning of a new era. Bürger adapted a few ballads from the *Reliques* (*Der Kaiser und der Abt*, *Die Entführung* etc.), but chiefly wrote original ballads in the

spirit of the old English and Scottish songs collected by Percy (*Der wilde Jäger*, *Das Lied vom braven Manne* etc.).

The history of the Romance in Germany is not quite so clear. It is to be traced to Spanish-French models through Gleim (1719—1803) and his followers, who imitated or translated Gongora (1561—1627) and the Frenchman Moncrif (1687—1770). These romances miss the real *Volkston* (except perhaps Gleim's *Der preußische Grenadier*), and like their models are mainly satirical and ironical.

Thus we can call Ballads in German literature those poems which are clearly from Germanic sources and which possess characteristics quite peculiar to the genius of those peoples; Romances, on the other hand, those poems whose tone is heroic, idealistic, brilliant and amorous, thereby recalling their Southern or Romance origin. Next as a balladwriter to Bürger in point of time comes Goethe. He has composed about thirty such poems, which fall naturally into three distinct groups, according to the date of their composition.

1. Those of his youth: — *Erlkönig*, *Der Fischer*, *Der Sänger*, *Der König in Thule*, *Heidenröslein* etc.

2. Those he wrote in emulation with Schiller: — *Der Zauberlehrling*, *Die Braut von Corinth*, *Gott und die Vajadere*, *Der Schatzgräber* etc.

3. Those of his old age: — *Der getreue Ekhart*, *Der Totentanz*, *Ballade*, *Paria* etc.

In the first and third periods Goethe composed Ballads proper according to the definition given above, the productions of the third period being somewhat longer than those of the first; whereas in the second period, under the influence of his friend Schiller, he wrote almost exclusively *Sdeingedichte* i. e. poems with

a moral, which thus, like nearly all those of Schiller, answer to our definition of Romance.

Ever since the days of Goethe and Schiller the Ballad and Romance have not ceased to be cultivated in Germany; in fact no country can pretend to vie with Germany in that branch of literature. Among the Romanticists none did more than Ludwig Uhland (1787—1862) — scarcely less famous in that class of poem than his two great predecessors — who found more than one disciple in the Suabian school (Schwab, Kerner, Mörike). These were followed by those artists in versification, Rückert and Platen, by the humorists Kopisch and Reinick, by the Austrian Lenau, and last but not least by Heinrich Heine (1799—1856), whose ballads have all the harmony and simplicity of the *Volkslied* with an additional tinge of sadness which gives them a peculiar charm.

Among the more modern poets mention should be made especially of Freiligrath and also of Anastasius Grün.

#### 84. *Der König in Thule.*

The poem was probably written contemporaneously with some of the early scenes of *Faust*, in 1773 or 1774. It was recited by Goethe during the Rhine journey of 1774. In 1790 it was printed in the *Faust Fragment*, where Gretchen sings it as she undresses, but in 1800 it was taken into *Neue Schriften* as a separate poem.

There is something Ossianic in the picture of the old king, living far away in the mists of the distant north, whose heart beats true to his mistress

till the last, and who parts from her keepsake, when the end comes, in so heroic a way.

The language is especially harmonious, and in addition to rime we have several instances of alliteration. In true ballad fashion the story is unfolded, not by lyric description or sentimental outpourings, but by quick progressive action.

l. 1. *Thûle* was for the ancients the extremest North, — *ultima Thule*, any vague far-distant land. It has been variously identified as Iceland, the Shetlands etc.

l. 3. *Buhle* could originally be used either for a man or woman. It was formerly quite an honourable name and can here quite well be understood of a *wife*. Its modern meaning is *paramour*, but the word has still its old meaning in the compound *Rebenbuhler*, a *rival*.

l. 5. *Es ging ihm nichts darüber*, *nothing was more precious in his eyes*.

l. 7. A biblical expression.

l. 9. This line originally ran: *Und als es kam zum Sterben*.

l. 12. *zugleich*, at the same time, along with the rest.

ll. 13—16. This is the regular picture of the mediaeval king surrounded by his faithful vassals.

l. 17. *der alte Becher*. The word is used to express that his only remaining pleasure in life was to drink from the sacred cup.

l. 19. *den heil'gen Becher*. For him the cup is *sacred*, for it represents to him the one great duty of his loyal soul — to keep alive the memory of her from whose hands he had received it.

l. 21. *trinken, fill with water*. The ringing on the words, *trinken* — *sinken* — *sinken* — *trank*, in the last strophe is very effective.

l. 23. *täten*, not a Subjunctive, but the old Imperfect Indicative: M. H. G. *tete*. *täten* — *sinken* is the popular periphrase, like the English, *I did not know*. Cf. *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung* No. 25, l. 21, Note.

### 85. Der Fischer.

The poem first appeared in 1779, and was probably written in the previous year. It is not improbable that it was inspired indirectly by the sad end of Christiane von Lasberg, who drowned herself in the Ilm on January 16, 1778, having, it is reported, a copy of *Werther* in her pocket at the time. The spot was one which Goethe passed every evening on returning to his *Gartenhaus*. That the event made a very deep and painful impression on him is certain. To Eckermann however he declared in 1823 that the ballad expresses simply the sentiment of the charm and attraction of water inviting to bathe in summer. That Goethe himself was very fond of bathing is well known; — he first learnt to swim in the Ilm in the summer of 1778.

The theme, that of a beautiful woman, personifying the attractive power of water, luring a man to his doom, is a common one in all Northern poetry. With it may be compared the Lorelei legend. The whole is in regular ballad tone, and suggests admirably the demoniacal and mysterious.

Both metre and language are calm and even, and well fitted to suggest the placid insidious influence of the element.

1. 1. The picture is that of foaming spray-covered water, in which it would be easy to imagine the white body of a mermaid.

1. 3. *Angel*. The word was regularly masculine in Middle High German, and was so used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Wieland, Schiller etc., and also by Goethe, though he later on employs it in the feminine.

1. 4. He is not only *ruhevoll*, but free from all ardour or passion.

1. 6. *Teilt sich* — *empor*: a pregnant construction, — the water parts to let something rise.

I. 10. **Was** is used here colloquially for the South German *zu was* = warum.

I. 11. **Menschenwitz**. **Witz** is here used in its old sense of **Verstand**, **Klugheit**.

I. 12. **Todesglut**, the air, which is death to the fishes. The sunshine and dry air are to them a *fiery* death.

I. 13. **wie's Fischlein** = **wie es den Fischlein**.

I. 14. **wohlig**, formed by Goethe, on the analogy of **frendig**, **wonnig**, not from **wohl** but **Wohl**.

I. 15. **wie du bist** = **wie du gehst und stehst**, without preparation or delay.

I. 16. **würdest erst gesund** = **würdest dann erst recht gesund**, would then learn for the first time what real well-being means.

II. 17—24. The whole strophe is very famous. It expresses the longing for resolution into the elements of a blasé man of the eighteenth century — the same sort of idea and longing which is expressed in *Berther*. An interesting parallel to Goethe's *Fischer* is Schiller's *Lied des Fischerknaben* (*Tell I.*).

I. 17. The classical idea of Helios who plunges daily into Okeanos.

I. 19. **wellenatmend**, either in the sense of *breathing the watery element*, or *bathed in vapour*.

II. 19—20. **fehrt — her** = **fehrt — zurück**.

I. 21. **Himmel**, the placid blue expanse of water is compared to the *sky*.

I. 22. **feuchtverflärt**, of the moist radiance of the sunlit water.

I. 30. He was lost now beyond all hope; resistance was no longer possible for him.

### 36. Erlkönig

This ballad is one of Goethe's earliest and is to be traced back to Herder's influence. It cannot have been written later than the spring of 1782, and was originally introduced into the *Singspiel: Die Fischerin*. It was sung at the beginning of the piece on its production at Tiefurt on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1782, in keeping

with Goethe's favourite practice of substituting the singing of a ballad for a spoken monologue. Cf. the singing of *Der König in Thule* by Gretchen in *Faust* I ll. 2760 ff. It was taken separately into *Schriften*, 1789.

That both the name and the subject of the ballad were suggested by the translation of a Danish ballad, *Erlkönigs Töchter*, in Herder's *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* is not certain but extremely probable. The first two strophes of this ballad will show at once the similarity and the difference:

„Herr Oluf reitet spät und weit,  
Zu bieten auf seine Hochzeitsleut';  
Da tanzen die Elfen auf grünem Land,  
Erlkönigs Tochter reicht ihm die Hand.

Willkommen, Herr Oluf, was eilst von hier?  
Tritt her in den Reihen und tanz mit mir!  
Ich darf nicht tanzen, nicht tanzen ich mag,  
Frühmorgen ist mein Hochzeitstag."

Whether Goethe associated the *Elfen* and the *Erlen* (*alders*) is uncertain, though he has more than once brought the two into close connection. The *Elfen* or *elves* play a great part in northern mythology, where they are cloud or storm spirits, who are especially dreaded on account of their habit of stealing children and young men in order to make their own race bigger. They are represented generally as being goodnatured, but liable to fits of sudden passionate fury if their whims are thwarted.

The Danish word is *ellekonge* or *ellerkonge*, and the form *Erlkönig* is probably due to a mistake of Herder.

The quick movement of the ballad with its ascending rhythm and frequent anapaests is a great contrast to the slow placid movement of the preceding

poem. In v. 25 we have even three *Geſtungen* in succession, and throughout the rush and stress of action is wonderfully reproduced in the rhythm.

The legends connected with the Elves have been a favourite theme of modern ballad-writers. With the *Erlkönig* may be compared Matthison's *Die Elfenkönigin*, Anastasius Grün's *Elfenliebe*, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's *Der Haidemann*, Uhland's *Die Elfen*, and more particularly the latter's *Harald*.

l. 1. The opening with question and answer is in true *Boltsließ* tone.

l. 3. *wohl*, *tight*, is strongly accented.

l. 5. *was* is colloquial for *warum*. Cf. *Der Fischer* No. 35, l. 10, Note.

l. 6. It is left to our imagination whether the child actually does see what is hidden from the father's more sober sense. Notice the climax: the child first *sees*, then *hears*, and lastly *is grasped*. The king also speaks three times, and there too we see the working up to a climax.

l. 7. *Schweif*, *train*.

l. 12. *gülden* is the older and correct form of the Adjective. *Golden* is a new formation from the substantive *Gölb*. Cf. Note to *Hans Sachs* No. 25, l. 30.

l. 19. *Reihen*. The *Reihen* or *Reigen* (M. H. G. *reie*, M. G. *reige*) was originally the song to the dance, and then was applied to the dance itself.

l. 26. The elf-king is thwarted and his whole demoniacal nature breaks forth

l. 25. The three-fold *Geſtung* represents the fierce excitement and terror,—the gap has to be bridged in reading as it were with haste and difficulty.

l. 29. At last even the father is seized with the vague presentiment, and his rational explanations no longer suffice him. He holds in his arms the dying child, but to the end we are left in doubt as to whether it is terror alone or the malice of the elves that has wrought the mischief.

### 87. Der Sänger.

First published in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Book II, Chapter XI, in 1795. It was probably written in 1783 when the fourth book of *Wilhelm Meister* (the present Second Book) was finished. In the *Lehrjahre* it is sung by the old harper. In 1782 Goethe had been made *Kammerpräsident*, and the present ballad is a sigh of regret for that which he would gladly have been. Material reward is only for those who deal with the material world; Goethe who though young has already had material recognition enough, feels that, after all, true appreciation is the poet's only real reward. The whole is a model of a simple direct Romance, telling a story in straightforward fashion in concise and melodious language. The whole picture is mediaeval, — on some great festive occasion the singer appears and at once charms the hearts of all, the beauty of his song being shown us in its effect on those assembled and the feeling of admiration and gratitude which it evokes in the king. Parallel to Goethe's *Sänger* are Schiller's *Graf von Habsburg*, Theodor Körner's *Sängers Wandersied* and Uhland's *Des Sängers Fluch*.

I. 1. We are taken at once to the heart of the story and the poem opens with the words of the king. It is the old courtly time of the *Minnesänger* and song-loving knights, and the singer is not allowed to remain long outside, — his song secures him at once the welcome of an honoured guest.

ll. 7—8. *mir* is an example of the so-called ethical dative common in French and German in familiar language. It occurs likewise in older English: cf. *Taming of the Shrew* I, 2, 11: Knock *me* at this gate, etc. Cf. also *Der getreue Edart*, No. 42, l. 21.

l. 8. The singer feels no awe and no inferiority in the presence of the royal gathering; he addresses the assembled knights and ladies with self-assured yet courtly compliment.

l. 13. He closes his eyes as if dazzled by so much brilliance.

l. 14. *Ergezen* is the correct form from M. H. G. *ergetzen*. For the change to the present form *ergözen* cf. the change of M. H. G. *leßel* to *Löffel*, *helle* to *Hölle*, *gewelbe* to *Gewölbe* etc. cf. *Der getreue Edwart*, No. 42, l. 40.

l. 16. We are not told what he sings — the song is described by its effect on the various hearers, the knights, the ladies and the king.

l. 21. *goldene Kette*: the reward though golden is yet a chain.

l. 28. *zu = in addition to.*

ll. 29—33. These lines contain the central idea of the poem, and are at the same time an expression of Goethe's personal feeling.

ll. 37—42. *Trank* is the *beverage*, *Trunk* the *single draught*.

l. 40. The proverbial form is *Geht dir's wohl, so denk an mich.*

### 38. Der Rattensänger.

The ballad was first printed in 1804, but the time of composition is uncertain. This frequently treated story seems to date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Goethe learnt it from Gottfried's *Historische Chronika*, which he read as a boy. There the story runs as follows: — „Im Jahre 1284 hat sich der traurige Fall mit den Kindern zu Hameln, im Braunschweigischen Lande begeben. Es hatte ein Landstreicher sich mit den Bürgern um ein gewisses Geld verglichen, daß er mit einer kleinen Pfeife alle Ratten und Mäuse aus der Stadt führen und sie dieses Ungeziefers entladen wollte. Er that solches und führte Ratten und Mäuse hinüber in ein Wasser, worin sie ersaußen mußten. Da ihm aber

die Bürger zu Hameln (wie man saget) seinen Lohn nicht gaben, kam er auf einen Freitag, im Monat Junio, in die Stadt, weil die Leute in der Kirche waren, und sing wieder an zu pfeiffen. Da sammelten sich 130 Kinder, die führte dieser Pfeiffer alle hinaus, gieng mit ihnen in das Thal Koppenberg, und führte sie da in den Berg hinein, daß weder Stumpf noch Stiel von ihnen nach derselben Zeit gesehen worden. Es schreiben die von Hameln die Jahr-Zahl noch vom Ausgang ihrer armen Kinder. Also lohnet der Satan, wenn man sich mit ihm einläßet."

The theme has been frequently treated in recent times also, as in Robert Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. Goethe deals with the subject in a very different spirit, as is seen already in the three different descriptions the piper gives of himself in the three strophes, — Rattenfänger, Kindersänger, Mädchenfänger. The tone throughout is jesting and half satirical, and the light manner of the whole has little of the usual ballad note. It might in fact almost be described as the old popular ballad allegorised, for this merry clever rogue has quite different ideas in his head from the grim old piper of the popular legend, and is throughout applying the attributes of the latter to himself with a double meaning.

l. 12. For this use of *golden* cf. Note to *Zueignung* No. 1, l. 108.

l. 13. *trußig*, older now purely poetical form of *trübig*, frequently used in connection or in rime with *stüßig*.

l. 17. *vielgewandt*: he is not a singer alone, but versatile, and skilled in many seductive arts.

### 89. Der Schatzgräber.

Written in 1797. In the preceding year Goethe had translated for the Hören the Second Book of

Benvenuto Cellini, and the magic formulas with which that work had made him familiar were still fresh in his mind. The immediate inspiration of the poem was given by a picture in the German translation of Petrarch's *De Remediis utriusque Fortunae*, in which a beautiful boy is presenting a shining bowl to a man reading a book, while in the centre are seen magicians, on the right Satan, and in the background gold pieces are being taken from the earth. In the *Tagebuch* for May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1797 we find the note: „Artige Idee, daß ein Knabe einem Schatzgräber eine leuchtende Schale bringt”.

The root idea of the poem is contained in the lines:

Tages Arbeit, Abends Gäste!  
Sauer Wochen, frohe Fest!

Happiness is not to be sought in the anxious soul-destroying thirst for riches, but in honest toil and the healthy legitimate pleasures which a life of usefulness always brings in its train.

The story, which is very Faust-like in theme, shows the happy change which had taken place in Goethe's frame of mind. The boy represents the spirit of youthful merriment in man, without which all gain is as Dead-Sea fruit. The treasure-seeker is Goethe himself, who had likewise come to this belief in the blessedness of labour, — of labour as the end in itself and not merely the means.

Of the poem itself Schiller says: „Es ist so musterhaft schön und rund und vollendet, daß ich dabei recht gefühlt habe, wie auch ein kleines Ganze, eine einfache Idee, durch die vollkommene Darstellung, einem den Genuss des Höchsten geben kann”.

The slow-moving trochees are well adapted to the subdued and mournful tone of the story, while the

beautiful rhythm and the unusual but highly effective arrangement of rimes are worthy of special study. For the metre cf. Introduction II A: XXXVI. Compare *Johann der Seifensieder* of Hagedorn (1708—1754), and also *Der Hänfling* of Lichtwer (1719—1783).

ll. 1—4. These lines give the motive which impelled him to the action on which the story depends.

l. 2. *meine langen Tage*, my *weary* days.

ll. 7—8. This was the usual pact in the mediaeval superstition and the payment was exacted in full. With Goethe we see the idea of eighteenth-century tolerance, and an ending which Schiller declared to be far from tragic.

l. 13. *auf die gelernte Weise*. The rites he has just enumerated are the traditional and indispensable ones.

l. 17. *von weit'en*. The usual form would be *von weit'lem*, but this form is frequently employed by Goethe. So in *Graust I* 3094: *Mit Grausen seh' ich daß von weit'en*.

l. 21. There were none of the phenomena usually represented as heralding an appearance of the Evil One, but the apparition stood suddenly there before him.

l. 27. From the bowl streamed a light which illuminated all around. Cf. l. 23.

l. 33. *Rut des reinen Lebens*, an unusual pregnant construction, meaning the *heart to lead a pure life*.

l. 38. *Tages* is not commonly thus used as an Adverbial Genitive, though we have it in compounds, *Sonntags* etc., and also the corresponding form, *Abends*. It is not however to be regarded as a Genitive depending on *Arbeit* as is sometimes stated.

ll. 38—39. These lines have become proverbial and are especially popular for the banners of workmen's clubs and unions.

#### 40. *Der Zauberlehrling*.

First printed in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for 1798, and written in the previous year.

The source is Lucian's *Philopseudes*, which Goethe probably knew in Wieland's translation, where it appears under the name *Lügenfreund*.

The present poem is a splendid example of a dramatic ballad in which the story is unfolded by action, not by description. There is uninterrupted life and movement, and the attention is held throughout, as we do not know till the end what the outcome will be. It is probably to be taken as allegorical, and directed against the swarm of mediocre poets and imitators, who meddle with a power which they do not understand and cannot command, and consequently as belonging to the *Xenienkampf*.

The story in Lucian is told by Eucrates in a gathering at his house. After narrating many wonders which he had seen performed by the Egyptian priest Pancrates whom he had known in his youth, such as the riding on crocodiles etc., he tells how when travelling alone with Pancrates, the latter would, on arriving at an inn, convert into a servant any object that came to hand, such as a bolt or a broom. Having heard the magic formula Eucrates then in the absence of Pancrates converted a pestle into a servant, whereupon he underwent the experience narrated in our poem.

I. 1. The monologue begins with the first line and is kept up throughout with the exception only of the last strophe. It is a striking proof of the mature command of form and mastery of poetry which Goethe had acquired, that he could sustain through so long a monologue a never-flagging life and movement.

I. 5. *Wort und Werke*, the formulas and the necessary preparations and rites.

II. 9—14. These are the words of the formula, which he says over to himself to make sure that he still retains them.

II. 23—28. He now addresses the formula to the broom.

I. 32. mit raschem Gufse = indem er rasch ausgießt.  
I. 40. vollgemessen = das volle Maß, in abundance.

I. 56. He gets more excited till he at length breaks out in imprecations against the being he has himself created.

I. 63. This line is an approximation to the formula which he has obviously heard but forgotten.

I. 73. *Röbold*, originally used with a good meaning as *spirit of the house*, has shared the fate of so many words, and deteriorated in meaning.

I. 85. *Raß und näßer* is Goethe's favourite form for the common *näßer und näßer*. Cf. *Gütegnung* No. 1, I. 38, Note.

I. 88. He is now so desperate that he calls upon the master whom he would least of all wish to have as a witness of his exploit.

II. 91—92. These two lines have become common quotations.

I. 94. *Beſen! Beſen!* Because there are now two of them.

I. 95. *Seid's geweſen*, i. e. *ſeid nicht mehr Geiſter*, — a Perfect Imperative.

#### 41. Die wandelnde Glocke.

Riemer (Goethe's secretary and the former tutor of his son) relates in his *Mitteilungen über Goethe* that the ballad owes its origin to a joke he and Goethe's son August played upon a small child. Goethe heard the story, and though he appeared to pay no particular attention to it at the time made use of it in this way some years afterwards. The poem was written on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1813 at Teplitz, and first appeared in *Werke*, 1815.

I. 3. *ein Wie, some pretext.*

I. 7. *bich nicht hingewöhnt, not formed the regular habit of going*, — a pregnant construction.

I. 14. *gefudelt*, a common dialectic and colloquial word = *flunkern*, to *cram* or *humbug* anyone.

I. 19. *lauft*, purely dialectic for *läuft*.

*es lauft, es kommt = es kommt gelaufen, comes running.*

I. 21. It dodges just at the right moment. *Husch* is used of any sudden unexpected movement.

ll. 22—23. It goes straighter than the clumsy bell: — also the idea is suggested that the child is better acquainted with field and bush than with school and chapel.

l. 26. *den Schaden*, the fright and the whole terrible experience.

#### 42. *Der getreue Eckart.*

This ballad was written on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 1813, at Eckartsberga and had its origin in a Thuringian popular tradition, probably connected with the name of the village where it was composed, and related to Goethe by his travelling companion. Two letters of Goethe, one to his wife and the other to his son, establish this point beyond contention. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 1813, he addressed from Dresden the following letter to his wife: „Mein Begleiter erzählte mir eine alte Geisterlegende, die ich sogleich als wir in Eckartsberge still hielten, rhythmisch ausbildete”, and from Teplitz he wrote to his son on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June of the same year: „Nun will ich dir aber auch abermals ein Gedicht schicken. Es ist die erste Frucht meiner Abreise von Weimar und zwar um 10 Uhr früh (den 17.) in Eckartsberge geschrieben, da mir mein Begleiter kurz vorher dieses Thüringerwaldmärchen erzählt hatte”.

In the fable Eckart der Getreue is the man who either goes before the *Hulden* bearing a white staff in order to warn people to keep out of the way, or sits before the *Venusberg* warning people not to enter. The *Venusberg*, commonly identified with the *Hörselberg* near Eisenach, was the legendary home of *Frau Holle* or *Hulda*, who became later identified with *Venus*, and her train were the *Hulden*, or, as Goethe calls them, with a play on the word, the *Unholden*. Goethe passes over the *wütende Heer* of the *Hulden*, and emphasizes

the moral side, the reward of the children's silence, making of it a *Kindermärchen*, and contrary to his custom himself points the moral at the end.

The change in the character of the *Hulden*, who were originally not evil or unfriendly to men, was due to Christian influence. Grimm says: „Das Christentum machte allmählich die alten *Hulden* zu lauter *Unholden*, und der Name *Hulde* war gleichbedeutend mit *Hexe*“. Eckart calls them both *Hulden* und *Unholden*; the children call them die *unholdigen Schwestern*. The character of Eckart is enshrined in the proverb; „Du bist der treue *Eckart*, du warnest jedermann“; or „Der treue *Eckart* warnet jedermann“.

The poem has the true ballad tone of mystery and of the superhuman, while the language is popular and even of childlike simplicity.

I. 5. das mühsam geholste, das Bier. For the form compare I. 27: Der alte *Getreue*, der *Eckart*.

I. 7. drüden sich, try to escape from the threatening danger *by ducking*.

I. 9. The repetition is employed with beautiful effect.

II. 10—12. *Eckart* gives then as *Warner* advice how to render the *Unholden* *bold*, and avoid all danger.

I. 13. Gesagt so geschehn. Usually gesagt (wie) getan.

I. 15. schlampft, usually *schlampft*, to *drink noisily and greedily*. The alliteration in this and the preceding line adds greatly to the effect.

I. 18. *Getal*, a new formation which is however found in the moderns, as Platen etc.

I. 21. *Büppchen*, a term of endearment applied to children. Cf. Faust I, 3120: Liebe *Buppe*, fürcht' ihn nicht.

I. 21. *mit* is an ethic dative.

I. 22. *Schelten*. The plural of *Schelte*, a *reprimand*, is uncommon. Cf. I. 33.

I. 24. *Mäuslein*, also a caressing term applied to children, though here there is at the same time the idea of *mauselish*.

I. 26. *Eckart* was in the legend a lover of children.

I. 31. *setzen* = *vorsegen*. Simple for compound.

l. 40. For *ergeßt* see *Der Sänger*, No. 37, l. 14, Note.  
 l. 44. *Alderman*, from the English, and used of any old man who by his dignity or position commands respect. It is similarly used by Klopstock, Voss, Wieland etc.  
 l. 57. Cf. line 40, Note.

#### 43. Ballade.

The *Ballade* was begun in the autumn of 1813, as we know from Goethe's Diary, and in November of that year the first 81 lines were completed, but the whole not till towards the end of 1816. The idea had, however, occupied him for a much longer period, as we learn from Eckermann (*Gespräche*: December 16, 1828): „Ich habe die *Ballade* lange mit mir herumgetragen . . . ehe ich sie niederschrieb; es stecken Jahre von Nachdenken darin, und ich habe sie dreimal bis viermal versucht, ehe sie mir so gelingen wollte, wie sie jetzt ist“. It was first printed in Goethe's periodical *Über Kunst und Altertum*, 1820, and taken into *Werke*, 1827. The words *vom vertriebenen und zurückkehrenden Grafen*, which are appended to the title in most editions, are not the poet's own; he called it simply *Ballade*.

For the elements of the ballad Goethe is indebted to Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry: The Beggar's Daughter of Bednall-Green*, and also possibly Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Goethe himself gave an interpretation of the *Ballade* in *Über Kunst und Altertum*, 1821.

The subject is a common old popular theme, that of an exile returning unknown to the home of his ancestors — a mediaeval formula of human life. The whole is artistically welded into a single scene, present and past being cleverly woven together; the past being

represented in the story of the old man up to the point where narration passes over into action, and the present takes up the past.

l. 2. The children take advantage of the absence of their parents to introduce the old bard, and hear his stories.

l. 5. *gangen*, the original form of the Past Participle without the prefix *ge* —. It is still found in popular language and in poetry. Cf. the *Bolfslied*:

„Als ob sein herzallerliebster Schatz  
Jns Kloster gangen wär“.

and *Das Sonett*, No. 48, l. 8.

l. 9. The refrain is throughout skilfully used to keep before our eyes the children, who form a kind of chorus whose emotions are a commentary on the action.

l. 10. The singer begins his story and we get at once the most wonderful accumulation of romantic circumstances.

Der *Graf* (l. 13) is the singer himself, the house he left is the house in which they are now assembled, and the *Töchterlein* (l. 17) he then carried out hidden under his mantle is the mother of his two small auditors.

l. 11. The dynasty of which he is a supporter has been overthrown, and he has to flee.

l. 12. These hidden treasures, the secret of which he alone possesses, we hear of again at the end.

l. 22. *heischt*, from O. H. G. *eiskön*, M. H. G. *eisichen*, English *ask*. Thus the *h* is inorganic. Cf. Goethe: *Hermann und Dorothea*, II, 30: *Noch nicht bin ich gewohnt, von Fremden die Gabe zu heischen.*

l. 32. *für Freude*, now, *vor Freude*. Goethe and Schiller frequently use this form, which is still kept in some expressions: *Schritt für Schritt*, *Tag für Tag* etc. Cf. Note to *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung*, No. 25, l. 46.

ll. 51—55. *So habe ich* etc. The transition from past to present is prepared by the singer's lapse into the first person, and by the delicate substitution of *die Kinder* for *sie* in the repetition: *Sie segne ich bei Tage, sie segne ich bei Nacht — Er segnet die Kinder.*

l. 59. *Schergen* originally meant merely *followers, servants*, being derived from *Schar*. O. H. G. *scario, scerjo*.

l. 70. He feels his newly acquired princely dignity with all the self-consciousness of an upstart.

ll. 73—74. The native dignity of the old count overawes even the rough soldiers.

l. 82. The old man speaks again, and declares himself the rightful owner of the castle, returned now with his exiled king to claim his own again, and enter also into possession of the hidden treasures of which he alone knows the secret.

l. 95. He declares a general amnesty, and forgives his son-in-law for past wrong and present insults.

l. 98. Die Fürstin, sie zeugte dir fürstliches Blut is an answer to the brutal words of the son-in-law in l. 80: die Bettlerin zeugte mir Bettlergeslecht. They also express the delight of the old man in these grandsons of his, whom he had often seen in his imagination and blessed by day and night, and whom he now finds as princely as he had pictured them to himself.

## V. ELEGIES.

Goethe wrote two books of Elegies; those of the first book he called Römische Elegien, while the second book is taken up with various other elegies — Alexis und Dora, Der neue Pausias und sein Blumenmädchen, Euphrosyne, Das Wiedersehen, Amphytor, and Hermann und Dorothea, which might more properly be described as an epistle. Goethe's assertions in the Campagne in Frankreich, in the Tag- und Jahresheften, as well as in the letters to Herder and Karl August, make it quite clear that the *Roman Elegies* were not begun before the autumn of the year 1788, a few months after his return from Italy, when he, to quote his own words: „sonst in Einsamkeit und Abgeschlossenheit von allen Freuden lebend und in wenig mitteilsamer Stimmung, jenes glückliche häusliche Verhältnis gefunden hatte, das ihn in dieier wunderlichen Epoche lieblich zu erquiden wußte”. The *happy domestic relation* refers

to Christiane Vulpius, whom Goethe in imagination had transported to the land where life had seemed to him so full of glory. Although there can be no doubt that in sketching the figure of Faustine, the beautiful girl of the *Roman Elegies*, Goethe had chiefly Christiane in mind, yet evidence is not wanting that several traits were furnished by a Roman girl whose acquaintance he had made during his stay in the Eternal City.

Another letter to Herder, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1790, in which Goethe writes: „Meine Elegien sind wohl zu Ende und es ist gleichsam keine Spur dieser Wärde mehr in mir”, leads us to the conclusion that the *Roman Elegies* were completed in the spring of that year. They owe their origin to an assiduous study of Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid, the *Triumbvirn der Liebe*, as Goethe called them, but the poet never lost his own individuality, and despite an occasional warmth of expression, they are as near perfection as anything he ever wrote.

The Elegies of Book II are more varied, as will be seen from the example comprised in the present selection. With the exception of the fourth (*Das Wiedersehen*, 1793?), they belong to the years 1796—1798.

In conclusion it should be pointed out that Goethe's elegies are elegies in the classical sense, that is to say, poems in distiches consisting of an hexameter and a pentameter. In the modern elegy all metrical forms are permissible, provided the subject is plaintive and melancholy; whereas in the classical elegy all subjects can be treated provided distiches are employed. Thus the modern elegy is just the opposite of the classical elegy.

For the metre cf. Introduction II A. XXXVIII sqq.

## 44. (Röm.) THE SEVENTH ROMAN ELEGY.

In this poem Goethe gives vent to the joy he felt at being under Italy's blue sky, after the troubles and worries of social and administrative life during the last few years in Weimar. For some years before his departure for Italy (3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1786), in spite of his love for Karl August and his high sense of duty, Goethe had felt dissatisfied with his position. Already in 1782 we find him writing: „Wie viel wohler wäre mir's, wenn ich von dem Streit der politischen Elemente abgesondert den Wissenschaften und Künsten, wozu ich geboren bin, meinen Geist zuwenden könnte”. For some time he resisted, and was able to do so largely on account of Frau von Stein's comforting influence, yet he felt that he could no longer continue an existence which allowed him no time for scientific research or literature. He felt that he must have leisure to finish all the large compositions which lay around him in fragments — Faust, Egmont, Tasso, Wilhelm Meister, not to speak of lesser works. Even Sphingenie, the only larger poem which he had succeeded in completing during the years 1776—1778, appeared to him so imperfect that he determined to recast it entirely. His health, too, as the result of all these anxieties, was far from good. In short, life in Weimar had become unbearable: „Wie das Leben der letzten Jahre (in Weimar)”, he wrote from Italy, „wollte ich mir eher den Tod gewünscht haben”. Goethe applied his usual remedy under such circumstances — flight. He first went to Karlsbad, where he spent a few happy days in the company of the Duke, Herder and Frau von Stein, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1786 he *stole away* to Italy.

l. 1. Goethe made two prolonged stays in Rome. The first extended from the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1786 to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 1787, and the second from the 6<sup>th</sup> of June of the same year to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, 1788.

ll. 1—10 The poet looks down from the Capitol (cf. l. 24), where once stood the Temple of Jupiter, on to the glorious city.

l. 2. *graulicher* = *düsterer*, *gloomy*, as opposed to the sunny South.

l. 3 sqq. The finite verbs following are dependent on *da* in l. 2.

l. 3. Goethe uses *Scheitel*, which in M. H. G. is exclusively feminine, both as masculine (cf. *Das Göttliche* No. 24, l. 31 and *Grenzen der Menschheit*, No. 23, l. 16), and feminine (as here) and in *Hermann und Dorothea*, No. 46, l. 16.

l. 9 sqq. Cf. Goethe's description in the *Italienische Reise*; *Montag, den 30. Juli* (1787): „Die Mondnächte sind ganz unglaublich schön; der Aufgang, ehe sich der Mond durch die Dünste herausgearbeitet hat, ganz gelb und warm, die übrige Nacht klar und freundlich. Ein kühler Wind, und alles sangt an zu leben. Bis gegen Morgen sind immer Parteien auf der Straße, die singen und spielen“.

ll. 11—22. *Vision*: the poet in his ecstasy imagines that he has been transported to Olympus.

l. 12. *Dein ambrosisches Haus*. Goethe uses the word here, as Homer does *ἀμφρόσιος*, of everything which in any way pertains to the immortal.

l. 14. *Jupiter Xenius* instead of *Zeus ξένιος*, *Zeus der Gastliche* (Schiller: *Kraniche des Ibylus*, Str. 3), *der wirtliche Gott* (cf. l. 21). Goethe calls upon the protector of the rights of hospitality, because he himself is but a guest in Italy.

l. 16. This is an invention on the part of Goethe. There is no authority in antiquity for the statement that Hebe, the goddess of youth, lifted heroes up to heaven.

l. 21. *gebeut* is really the correct form of the singular from M. H. G. *gebiutest*, *gebiutet*, the form in ie being due to levelling with the plural.

These forms, which were regularly employed by Luther, and were in common use among the classics of the eighteenth century, still survive in the modern poe-

tical language: *Was da freucht und fleugt* (Schiller), *Entzeuch dich deinem Wolfe nicht* (Platen).

I. 25. It was the duty of Hermes, among many others, to conduct the shades of the dead into the lower world. Hence his epithet *ψυχοπομός* or *ψυχαγωγός* (cf. Hom. Od. 24, 1). cf. also Goethe's *Euphrosyne* l. 145.

I. 26. Not far from the tomb of Cestius, close to the Aurelian Wall and the Porta San Paolo, stands the Protestant cemetery. Goethe's only son, August, was buried there in 1830.

#### 45. *Alexis und Dora.*

Composed in May 1796, and appeared with the title of *Sdylle* in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for the year 1797. In 1800 Goethe placed it among the *Elegies* in the new collection of his works, where, as now, it opened the second book. The motive of this beautiful poem, which marks as it were the zenith of Goethe's *antifävrierende* Periode (1787—1797), is uncertain, but his second departure for Venice after his newly-won household happiness seems to be the background of the situation. Goethe is happy but at the same time tormented by jealousy in the same way as Alexis.

Schiller, who was a great admirer of this poem (cf. *Briefwechsel*: June 18, 1796), but whose conception of art was that of an idealist, referring to the last part in the same letter of his correspondence with Goethe, says: „Dass Sie die Eifersucht so dicht daneben stellen, und das Glück so schnell durch die Furcht wieder verschlingen lassen, weiß ich vor meinem Gefühl noch nicht ganz zu rechtfertigen, obgleich ich nichts Befriedigendes dagegen einwenden kann. Dieses fühle ich nur, daß ich die glückliche Trunkenheit, mit der Alexis das Mädchen verläßt und sich einschifft, gerne

immer festhalten möchte". But Goethe was merely applying a precept which he had formulated for the plastic arts in his treatise on *Laokoon*, and replied to Schiller two days later: „Für die Eifersucht habe ich zwei Gründe. Einen aus der Natur: weil wirklich jedes unerwartete und unverdiente Liebesglück die Furcht des Verlustes unmittelbar auf der Ferse nach sich zieht; und einen aus der Kunst, weil die Idylle durchaus einen pathetischen Gang hat, und also das Leidenschaftliche bis gegen das Ende gesteigert werden mußte, da sie denn durch die Abschiedsverbeugung des Dichters wieder ins Leidliche und Heitere zurückgeführt wird".

I. 3. Die Geleise. Notice the feminine form for the more common das Gleis. Der Gleis also occurs.

I. 27. Seltne, rare, in the sense of excellent; an uncommon use in German.

I. 31. Generally the god of Love makes use of a bandage in order to hide from lovers the faults of the beloved one. Hence such expressions in German as eine Binde vor Augen haben, Jemandem die Binde von den Augen nehmen.

I. 44. Erschien is here used in a pregnant sense, to make a show, to stand out.

II. 48—50. Cf. the lines in *Trost in Tränen*, No. 16,  
ll. 25—28:

Die Sterne, die begehrt man nicht,  
Man freut sich ihrer Pracht,  
Und mit Entzücken blickt man auf  
In jeder heitern Nacht.

I. 61. It seems that some of Goethe's friends, especially the Kalb family, applied the most extraordinary interpretations to the *nachbereitetes Bündel*. Cf. Goethe's letter to Schiller (*Briefwechsel* sub 6th July, 1796), where he explains his meaning, and at the same time takes advantage of the opportunity to have a hit at the uneducated public: „Nun sieht man aber, daß man nie ins Ganze wirken kann und daß die Leser immer am Einzelnen hängen, da vergeht Einem dann Lust und Mut und man überläßt sie in Gottes Namen sich selbst".

l. 66. *Gesellen der Fahrt*, is a poetical expression for *Reisegefährten*.

l. 78. *Nicht*: the order of the words as in the French: *tout pays ne les produit pas*.

l. 80. *Bog* = *jag nieder*. Simple for compound.

l. 96. Thunder during fair weather was accounted a happy omen. Cf. Odyss. 20, 101 sqq.

l. 110. *Mit dem Donner des Zeus* = *Zugleich mit dem Donner des Zeus*.

l. 126. *Der länglichen Hand schönes Gebild*, according to the antique ideal of beauty (cf. Propertius II, 2, 5), which the Renaissance accepted. Cf. also the passage in Oswald von Wolkenstein, one of the mediaeval German courtly poets, where he sings the praises of *vinger lang, zway hendlin smal*.

l. 136. *Brand*, i. e. the consuming fire of love.

l. 140. *Der Herzweiflung Gefild* is Tartarus.

l. 149 With reference to Tibullus III, 6, 49 sqq: *periuria ridet amantum Juppiter*. cf. also Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet* II, 2): *At lovers perjuries, they say, Jove laughs*.

l. 150. *Schredlicher* is not a vocative applying to Zeus, but an adverb.

l. 158. An experience often given expression to by Goethe.

#### 46. *Hermann und Dorilaea*.

Composed in the early part of December 1796, whilst Goethe was occupied on his epic of the same name, and sent to Schiller as an announcement of that work. Together with Deutscher Barnabä and Oberon und Titania in Faust it was intended as an answer to the attacks which had been made upon him for his authorship of the Römische Elegien (1788—1790) and the Venetianische Epigramme (1791—1795), in the freedom of which his literary adversaries thought they had a good chance of taking revenge on Goethe for his participation in the production of the Xenien, a series of satirical epigrams numbering more than 400 composed

in collaboration with Schiller, and first published in the latter's periodical, the *Musenalmanach* (1797). The gradual development of these satirical distiches can be followed in the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller. The first remote suggestion seems to belong to Goethe, who, writing to Schiller on October 28, 1795, proposes to hold judgment at the end of the year on the unfair critics of the *Horen*, Schiller's newly-founded periodical. He recurs to the same idea in December of the same year: — *We must cultivate the idea which occurred to me lately of writing epigrams on all papers, each in a simple distich, like the Xenia of Martial*, and enclosed a few as a specimen.

Schiller highly approved the idea of the *Xenien* and during the course of 1796 a brisk exchange took place between the two poets. He even thought at one time that a certain completeness should be given to the enterprise by making the *Xenien* a vast repertoire of judgments and thoughts on literature, science, art, religion etc., but when he came to draw up the plan he became aware of the numerous lacunae. Besides, the moment of the publication of the *Musenalmanach* was at hand, and if the *Xenien* were kept back they would lose their point and sting. Thus the idea of universality had to be abandoned, though a certain compromise was arrived at, the philosophic and purely poetic *Xenien*, the *Bähme Xenien*, which did not belong to the original plan, being separated from the *Xenien* proper. Although Goethe and Schiller saw that the completeness at which they seem to have aimed for some time was not feasible, the *Xenien* had grown considerably since their inception, and from being originally intended to punish the enemies and detractors of the *Horen*, they became a systematic attack on what the two great poets

regarded as false and dangerous tendencies in German literature and society. The biting shafts of the *Xenien* were not slow to provoke retorts. Immediately hundreds of replies remarkable for bad verse and coarseness appeared, Christiane Vulpius especially being aimed at. It was in reply to these so-called *Antigenien* that the elegy of *Hermann und Dorothea* was written. Goethe wished to publish it in the first number of the *Horen* for 1797, but Schiller advised him not to do so, lest it should cause the fray to break out once again and with renewed fury. For the same reason the *Walpurgisnachtstraum* of *Faust* I was kept out of the periodical.

The elegy was not published till 1800, and only prefixed to the epic in the edition of 1820.

l. 1. *Also*, apparently takes up the objections of one or more of his detractors.

l. 1. The Roman elegiac poet Sextus Propertius (50 c—16 BC), the author of five books of elegies, served as a model for Goethe in his *Römische Elegien*. Martial, the famous Latin epigrammatist, born in Spain about 40 A. D., died in Rome A. D. 102. Of his works we possess 14 Books of Epigrams castigating the greed and vices of contemporary Rome with great vigour, but unfortunately they are not free from gross licentiousness. The 13<sup>th</sup> Book bears the title of *Xenia* (presents given to friends on parting) which was borrowed by Goethe and Schiller. Goethe had closely followed Martial in his *Venetian Epigrams*.

l. 2. *Der Verwegene*, refers to Martial's freedom in speech and licentiousness.

l. 3. *Die Alten* = die (das Studium der) alten Klassiker.

l. 3. *Die Schule zu hüten*. Cf. the expression *Das Haus, das Zimmer hüten*, to be confined to one's house or room. Goethe means that he should not be blamed for having continued to cherish the classics after his school days, instead of considering them as mere objects of school study.

l. 4. *Latium* = Italien. It was by sojourn in Italy that Goethe first arrived at a complete and exact know-

ledge and understanding of classical antiquity, as is proved by the *Roman Elegies* and the *Venetian Epigrams*.

1. 5. Natur seems to refer to Goethe's scientific works, of which the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* appeared in 1791 and his studies on Optik in 1792.

Schau = nach ihrem Wesen zu ergründen.

1. 6. Name refers to Newton, whose theory of colour Goethe bitterly opposed. At least we are to take it so if we conclude that Natur in the preceding line refers to Goethe's scientific studies, as most German critics seem to be inclined to do. Dogma here has no reference to religion but to art. It means *Kunstgesetz* and not *Glaubensgesetz*.

1. 7. Bedingender Drang, *constraining pressure*. The meaning is that the narrowing, deadening considerations of desired advantages or apprehended disadvantages (*angustiae vitae*) have interfered with his serene and free contemplation of life.

1. 10. Zeihen with the gen. (*solcher Fehler*) = the commoner word *befürdigen* which also takes an acc. of the person and a gen. of the thing.

1. 10. Der Böbel, *the populace, the rabble*. The word has always a pejorative signification in German. It is applied here to the authors of the polemical works written in answer to the Zenien.

Böbel nur sieht er in mir. His adversaries made the mistake of judging Goethe according to their own standards. Compare his letter to Schiller of December 5, 1796: *It is amusing to see how they (the critics) regard a nature different from their own as shallow, empty, and vulgar, how they direct their arrows against the outworks of appearance, and how little they suspect what an inaccessible stronghold that man possesses who is always in earnest with himself and the things about him.*

1. 11. An allusion to Herder and others who had been his friends.

1. 13. For the same idea cf. Schiller, *Quelle der Verjüngung*:

„Glaubt mir, es ist kein Märchen, die Quelle der Jugend, sie rinnet

Wirklich und immer. Ihr fragt, wo? In der dichtenden Kunst”.

1. 16. Goethe was 47 years of age at the time.

1. 16. Die Scheitel, feminine, now usually masculine. The fem. form is common in Luther and in the writers of

the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is the exclusive form in M. H. G. (cf. the elegy *Rom*, No. 44, l. 3, Note).

l. 18. According to Suetonius, *Caesar* cap. 45, Caesar had received the right to wear a laurel wreath at all times — *jus laurae perpetuo gestandae* — and had eagerly availed himself of it in order to hide his bald head.

l. 20. *Dem Würdigen*, that is, *to myself when I am more worthy of it*. Compare *Tasso* I, 3, where the poet, who has been crowned by Alphonso's sister, exclaims: —

„O, hebt ihn auf, ihr Götter, und verklärt  
Ihn zwischen Wölfen, daß es hoch und höher  
Und unerreichbar schwebe! Daß mein Leben  
Nach diesem Ziel ein ewig Wandeln sei“.

l. 21. Instead of fame Goethe desires for his approaching old age (*silberne Eode*) the continuation of domestic bliss (*Hofjen genug*), which he had found in the companionship with Christiane Vulpius, whom he had always insisted on regarding as his wife, in spite of the slanderous attacks of the *Anti-Xenten*.

l. 23. Cf.  I, 2802 etc. „Ein eigner Herr, || Ein  
braves Weib sind Gold und Perlen wert“.

l. 25. Laß is addressed to the Muse.

l. 26. The picture of the guests crowned with garlands seated or reclining at the feast or banquet is taken from classical antiquity, although the custom was not unknown in Germany during the Middle Ages. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1308 King Albrecht gave out with his own hand garlands to those partaking in the festival of May Day.

l. 27. The allusion is to Friedrich August Wolf (1759—1824), the famous philologist and professor of Halle and Berlin. In his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* Wolf had attempted to prove that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their present form were not the work of one poet, but must be assigned to various rhapsodists whom he called the *Homeribes*, though he was prepared to grant that the greater part of those poems was due to Homer himself. Goethe had made the acquaintance of the famous philologist at Weimar in May of the year 1795, and was at first a convinced *Wolfianer*. On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1796 he wrote to Wolf as follows: „Schon lange war ich geneigt, mich in dem epischen Fach zu versuchen, und immer schreckte mich der hohe Begriff von Einheit und Unteilbarkeit der Homerischen Gedichte ab. Nunmehr, da Sie diese herrlichen Werke einer Familie zu-

eignen, ist die Kühnheit geringer, sich in größere Gesellschaft zu wagen und den Weg zu verfolgen, den *Voss* in seiner *Luise* so schön gezeigt hat". In later years Goethe recanted and maintained the unity of the Homeric poems in his *Recensionen und Aufsätze*, in which the following passage occurs: „Eine neue Generation, welche . . . uns nachdem wir den Homer einige Zeit, und zwar nicht ganz mit Willen, als ein Zusammengefügtes, aus mehreren Elementen Angereichertes vorgestellt haben, abermals freundlich nötigt, ihn als eine herrliche Einheit, und die unter seinem Namen überlieferten Gedichte als einem einzigen höheren Dichtersinne entquollene Gottesgeschöpfe vorzustellen". For Goethe's later view compare also the poem *Homer wieder Homer*:

„Scharffsinnig habt ihr, wie ihr seit  
Von aller Verehrung uns befreit,  
Und wir bekannten überfrei,  
Dass Ilias nur ein Glückwerk sei.

Mög' unser Absall niemand känken;  
Denn Jugend weiß uns zu entzünden,  
Dass wir Ihn lieber als Ganzes denken,  
Als Ganzes freudig Ihn empfinden".

1. 28. Die vollere Wahn, i. e. a contest in which there are several competitors (*Homerides*), and in which an imitator (Goethe) may have some chance of success, whereas competition with that unique man (*dem Einen*) Homer, as unassailable as the gods, would be hopeless.

1. 31. The epic of *Hermann und Dorothea*, which the present elegy introduces to the reader, was not Goethe's sole appearance as a *Homeride*. He had already appeared in that role in *Raufilaa*, which remained a fragment, while subsequently he was busy on *Achilleis* (1799), which was to be as it were a conclusion of the *Iliad*, describing the death of Achilles, but which did not advance beyond one canto.

1. 31. Noch einmal getrunken! *One more drink, drink once more!* By an elliptical construction, a past participle has sometimes the value of an imperative. cf. *Hans Sachsen's poetische Sendung*, No. 25, l. 51, Note.

1. 32. *Befechte*, *bribe*, that is, incline the hearers to a more favourable judgment.

1. 33. Goethe announces that the subject of his epic is national, that the reader will be introduced into the

stilfere Wohnung i. e. the humble and honest conditions of life as depicted in *Hermann und Dorothea*.

ll. 35—36. Let the idyllic spirit, says Goethe, of the poet Voss accompany us.

J. H. Voss (1751—1826), the translator of Homer and the author of the idyllic poem *Luisa* (1795), may be said to have given Goethe the impulse which led him to write *Hermann und Dorothea*, though no comparison is possible between Goethe's masterpiece and the somewhat turgid homily on rural virtues of Voss. The following lines from a letter of Goethe to Böttiger are interesting as showing that, though not unmindful of the faults that existed in the production of his predecessor, Goethe was willing to grant him generous acknowledgement for having first shown the way: *This is Voss's merit, without whose Luisa this poem (his epic of Hermann und Dorothea) could not have arisen. Voss by the epic treatment of the family of a country parson has given an intelligent hint of where our epic belongs. Only his Luisa can be no real heroic poem, because it lacks all continuity, all consistency; for, by a far too extended painting of the smaller "hors d'œuvres", he has destroyed the epic effect.*

l. 36. *Masch*. In the poem of Voss the pastor's daughter and her betrothed Walter, the *würdige Freund*, are united on the evening before the day appointed for the marriage (the *Wolterabend*).

l. 37. *Die traurigen Bilder der Zeit* refers to the wars of the French Revolution. See Canto VI of *Hermann und Dorothea*.

l. 38. Cf. Hermann's words at the end of the epic of *Hermann und Dorothea*.

l. 39. As one day Goethe was reading aloud in Schiller's house the 4th Canto of *Hermann und Dorothea* which he had just completed, he himself was powerless to restrain his tears; adding, as he wiped his eyes: *so schmilzt man bei seinen eigenen Röhren*. The 4th Canto contains one of the most touching scenes in the whole poem, the conversation between Hermann and his mother near the apple-tree.

l. 40. *Singend, with my song.*

*Geflüht* = *eingeflüht*, another case of the simple verb for the compound.

l. 41. *Denn* = *dann*.

l. 44. *Erlärt* = *erscheinen lässt*.

#### 47. Euphrosyne.

This beautiful elegy was composed in memory of Christiane Becker (née Neumann), a young Weimar actress, whose precocious talent Goethe and his friend Corona Schröter had taken a special delight in perfecting. Goethe himself had trained her in the part of Arthur in Shakespeare's *King John*, her first important rôle, and one in which she had scored a great success. From that day she had been a favourite of the public. Goethe chose the name *Euphrosyne* (one of the three Graces), under which he celebrates his young friend, from the fact that it was in that part that he had last seen her act, in the *Zauberoper*, *Das Petermännchen*. The sad news of her death reached Goethe during his *Third Swiss Journey* (1797) as he was returning from St. Gothard. He probably planned the poem in Switzerland, but it was only finished in the course of the following year (1798) at Weimar, and first appeared in Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for the year 1799.

To the imposing regularity of the phenomena of nature the poet opposes the irregular and capricious destiny of man, in which the young too often precede the old to the grave. But he takes revenge on the cruelty of fate by assuring immortality to her whom death has snatched away in the spring of life (Christiane Becker was only 18 when she died), and in the same setting he unites all the memories she recalls — her grace in the part of Arthur, her ominous talent in depicting death, the skill with which she was wont to declaim the prologues he composed, and her eagerness to follow her master's counsels.

1. 3. *Tal*: the Reuss valley.
1. 5. *Des Tages* i. e. der *Tageswanderung* (*σταθμός*).
1. 6. *Göttliche Schlaf*: cf. Homer Il. 2, 19: *ἀμβρόσιος ὄννος*.

l. 8. The *Mohn* is called *heilig* because it is consecrated to Morpheus, the god of sleep.

ll. 9—16. In the same way the vision is made to appear in *Bueignung*, No. I, ll. 17 sqq.

l. 13. *Sch staune dem Wunder.* This construction would not be permissible in German prose. We should say instead, *ich staune über das Wunder*. *Staunen* with the simple dative is a favourite construction with Voss, and it is quite possible that Goethe borrowed it from his writings.

l. 17. *Berschwindend* i. e. *durch dein etwaiges Berschwinden*.

l. 20. *Bedeutend* = *aubenteud*.

l. 21. According to Hesiod the nine Muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne.

l. 34. The joys of this world are as frail as the light scaffolding (*Gefüst*) of the stage (cf. Schiller's words: „Leicht gezimmert nur ist Thespis' Wagen . . . Nur Schatten und Spole kann er tragen").

l. 36. The *täuschende Kunst* is of course the actor's art.

l. 38. *Ruft . . . an* i. e. *rufst in die Erinnerung zurück*.

l. 43. *Denkst* is for *gedenket*, the simple for the compound, as often in poetry.

l. 45. Shakespeare's *King John* was played at Weimar in 1791, the part of Prince Arthur being filled by Christiane Becker, who was then scarcely thirteen years of age. We have already noticed that she had been specially trained for the part by Goethe himself. In this connection Goethe remarks in the *Tag- und Jahresheften*: „Christiane Neumann, als Arthur von mir unterrichtet, tat wundervolle Wirkung; alle die Übrigen mit ihr in Harmonie zu bringen, mußte meine Sorge sein".

l. 47. *Drohest . . . Augen*: in the part of Hubert de Burgh, who is commissioned by the king to blind the young prince. It was Goethe himself who played the part of Hubert during the rehearsing of the piece.

l. 62. The word *schauern* is often used by Goethe, as here, to signify an unusually deep and earnest feeling for something great and noble, a feeling which excludes all familiarity, but on the other hand carries with it nothing of repulsion. Cf. *Faust II*, l. 1660: *Das Schauern ist der Menschheit bester Teil*, or again, Geibel's distich XV in

**Ethisches und Ästhetisches:** „Wo die Kritik aufhört und der Schauer beginnt, ist ein Grenzstein aufgerichtet; Talent scheiden sich hier und Genie“.

ll. 69—76. These lines recall forcibly the last ten verses of Schiller's *Spaniergang*, which was composed two years earlier.

l. 82. Gesehnkt i. e. gesenkt hätte: the old man would have been ready to die.

Kräftig i. e. er (der Jüngere) als der Kräftigere ihm (dem Älteren) als dem Schwächeren.

l. 83. Ordnung der Tage i. e. die gehörige Zahl der Lebensstage, indem es, was es an Lebenszeit dem einen zu viel gibt, dem anderen abzieht.

l. 84. Plaget = belagert, betrauert, the simple for the compound verb, as often in poetry.

l. 97. Also means here so, in this way, and not therefore, as usually.

l. 98. Deutend: by finding out the meaning of your lessons and applying them.

l. 99. A reference more especially to the prologues and epilogues of Goethe spoken by his young friend, and more generally to her parts in different plays.

l. 109. Bergeſſe for vergifſ. In the same way Goethe makes use of the forms nehm (e), helf (e), mess (e), betrete.

l. 110. Goethe refers to the management of the Weimar theatre, which had its anxieties and troubles as well as its joys.

l. 115. mein is the old genitive (M. H. G. *mîn*) used in poetry for the usual *meiner*.

l. 122. Cf. Goethe's words in the poem *Hegire*, No. 52, l. 39 sqq.

Wisset nur, daß Dichterworte  
Um des Paradieses Pforte  
Immer leise flapsend schwelen,  
Sich erbittend ew'ges Leben.

l. 123. Persephone was the wife of Hades (Pluto), the majestic queen of the shades, who ruled with her husband over the souls of the dead.

l. 132. Eudne was the wife of Capaneus, one of the seven heroes who marched against Thebes. He was struck by Zeus with lightning, as he was scaling the walls of Thebes, because he had dared to defy the god. While

his body was burning his wife Euadne leaped into the flames and died with him.

l. 134. *gemeines* = *gemeinsames*. Cf. Schiller: *Wallenstein's Tod* I, 5, 153.

l. 135. Antigone is described as the *most sisterly of souls* because, contrary to the commands of Creon, the King of Thebes, she buried her brother Polynices and in punishment was shut up by the tyrant in a cave, where she killed herself.

l. 136. Polyxena was the daughter of Priam and Hecuba and the affianced bride of Achilles. When the Greeks, on their voyage home, were still lingering on the coast of Thrace, the shade of Achilles appeared to them, demanding that Polyxena should be sacrificed to him. His son Neoptolemus accordingly slew her on the tomb of his father. Cf. the twelfth strophe of Schiller's *Rassandra*.

l. 142. *Schwirren* seems to be a translation of the Homeric *τριγένειαν* used of the shrill noise made by bats and applied also to departing souls. Here it is probably meant to indicate the gradual failing of words and their fusion one into another.

l. 144. For *gelassen*, a favourite expression with Goethe. cf. *Grenzen der Menschheit*, No. 23, l. 3, Note.

l. 145. Hermes as the herald of the gods and the conductor of the shades of the dead into the nether world is represented by Homer with a golden staff (*χρυσόρροπτος*).

## VI. SONNETS.

At first Goethe seems to have felt a kind of aversion for the sonnet, but, not to be beaten by its intricate rules, he composed one in which he attacks that form as too artificial and as prejudicial to a free outpouring of thought and feeling (cf. *Das Sonett*, No. 48). This opposition on his part did not last long, however. Two years later (1802) he proclaimed his conversion in a new sonnet which celebrates the alliance of art and nature (cf. *Natur und Kunst*, No. 49).

He even went further, and towards the end of 1807, during a stay at Jena, he wrote the cycle of seventeen sonnets which stands at the head of the second volume of his poems. There was a kind of mania at the time for the sonnet (*Sonettentwut*). Riemer tells us that at the literary evenings at the houses of Frommann and Knebel, where Goethe was at the time a frequent visitor, sonnets by Klinger, A. W. Schlegel, and Werner, who was present himself at a few of these gatherings, were especially read and discussed. *Goethe*, he adds, *likewise tried his hand in silence, for it was his way to allow himself to be spurred on to production by famous models.*

A heated discussion has arisen over the question to whom Goethe's sonnets were addressed. After the publication of *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (1835) the question seemed to be decided in favour of Bettina Brentano, the daughter of Maximiliane la Roche, but in spite of Hermann Grimm's able defence, it is now conclusively proved that the letters were doctored by Bettina, some of them being merely paraphrases of the sonnets, in order to make believe that she was their true heroine. It is not impossible, however, that the romantic young lady, who pursued Goethe with her enthusiastic affection, thought so herself. To our thinking there can be no doubt that Goethe's sonnets were addressed to Minna Herzlieb, an adopted daughter of the bookseller Frommann in Jena, who by her beauty, thoughtfulness and amiability had won the heart of the *dear old gentleman*, as she used to call him. The sonnet entitled *Charade* (No. 51) is evidently solved by the word *Herzlieb*, and the sonnet containing the words: *Lieb Kind! Mein artig Herz* (No. 50) also seems to be a direct allusion to her name, while the sonnet *Epoche* refers most pro-

bably to a visit that Goethe paid the Frommanns on Advent Day of the year 1807.

It is interesting to note that out of this relation, or rather out of its possibilities, grew *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (the *Elective Affinities*). For the form of Goethe's sonnets, and generally the history of the sonnet in German literature cf. Introduction II. B. LVII.

#### 48. Das Sonett.

Probably written in 1800, though some commentators place it as late as 1806. It appears to be a first expression of opinion on the suitability and value of the sonnet form, a question which was then being so much discussed in consequence of its use by the Romanticists and especially by A. W. Schlegel. The leader of the older generation in the attack on the Sonnet, as on the Romantics generally, was Voss, and like others of the older school Goethe too seems at first to have regarded the form with mistrust. The two quartets are put in the mouth of the champions of the sonnet i. e. the young Romanticists; the tercets are an ironical defence, which really embody the attacks of its opponents.

The following is the sonnet of A. W. Schlegel, by which Goethe's was not improbably inspired. It also bears the title: *Das Sonett*.

Zwei Steine heiß' ich viermal lehren wieder  
 Und stelle sie, geteilt, in gleiche Reihen,  
 Daß hier und dort zwei eingefäßt von zweien  
 Im Doppelchoro schwelen auf und nieder.  
 Dann schlingt des Gleichlauts Kette durch zwei Glieder  
 Sich freier wechselnd, jegliches von dreien.

In solcher Ordnung, solcher Zahl gedeihen  
 Die zartesten und stolzesten der Lieder.  
 Den werd' ich nie mit meinen Beilen kränzen  
 Dem eitler Spielerei mein Wesen dünktet  
 Und Eigensinn die künstlichen Gesetze.  
 Doch, wem in mir geheimer Zauber winket,  
 Dem leih' ich Hoheit, füll' in engen Grenzen,  
 Und reines Ebenmaß der Gegenläge.

I. 2. wir, i. e. the Romanticists.

I. 8. vollendet blieben, loses nothing of its artistic perfection. Blieben is an old form of the past participle cf. Ballade, No. 43, l. 5, Note. So Gerhardt, Abendblieb: Wo bist du, Sonne, blieben?

II. 9—14. He too would gladly try his mastery over the form, but he finds his freedom hampered and that he is only botching to satisfy the form and the rimes, and not exercising freely his full powers.

11

#### 49. Natur und Kunst.

This sonnet first appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> scene of the Vorspiel: Was wir bringen, which was produced at the opening of the new theatre at Lauchstedt in 1802. It is there spoken by the nymph who represents Nature, after Mercury by a touch of his wand has brought her and a boy who symbolises Art to mutual recognition. The pair thereupon go off hand in hand.

In the Vorspiel it follows the lines:

Im Sinne schwiebt mir eines Dichters alter Spruch,  
 Den man mich lehrte, ohne daß ich ihn begriff,  
 Und den ich nun verstehe, weil er mich beglückt —  
 an allusion to the words of Horace, *Ars Poetica* (409—411) that Nature can do nothing without Art, and Art nothing without Nature.

The conclusions expressed here are applicable not only to the sonnet form or even to the whole of art,

but to life generally. Not rude untrained power can achieve the most, but power ruled and restrained by order and law.

ll. 1—2. He has found that through the form of the Sonnet, as through every other artistic form, one can get back to Nature.

l. 10. *ungebundene Geister, minds impatient of all restraint.*

ll. 12—13. Only by limitation and concentration, not by vague heaven-storming ambition, can anything great be achieved.

### 50. Sie kann nicht enden.

Bettina Brentano in her ~~remarkable book~~, Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde, which is now generally looked upon as being fabricated and thoroughly unreliable (see Introduction to the Sonnets), tries to prove that she is meant in this sonnet, and that line 9 is a poetical setting of the words in which Goethe had addressed her. Although not absolutely proveable it seems more than probable that it is not merely an accident that this line contains the word Herzlieb, and that the sonnet was addressed to Minna Herzlieb.

### 51. Charade.

Written on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1807. That the answer is Herzlieb there can be no reasonable doubt.

The idea was suggested to Goethe by a sonnet charade of Zacharias Werner, also on the word Herzlieb. Werner communicated his to Goethe on December 16<sup>th</sup>, Goethe his to Riemer on the following day, the 17<sup>th</sup>.

We give below the sonnet of Werner.

„Herz ist was Liebes, was so lieb wir haben,  
 Wenn wir auch nicht recht wissen es zu hegen;  
 Bald tanzt es gern, bald will's der Ruhe pflegen,  
 Bald schmollt's, bald tut es uns mit Lächeln laben.  
 Lieb ist ein herzig's Beilchen, das begraben  
 Im Wiesengrün, als könnt' es sich nicht regen;  
 Doch duftet Euch mit Blumenkelch entgegen,  
 So geht's, wie mit dem Röslein und dem Knaben.  
 Herzlieb ist mir, wenn Schöne schön mich preisen,  
 Wenn Helios mir strahlt nach Finsternissen,  
 Und etwas anders, das ich nicht darf nennen.  
 Die erste Silbe ist wie Wachs und Eisen,  
 Die zweite Glut, die wird das Wachs verbrennen;  
 Das Ganze, ach! wir möchten's alle küssen!"

I. 6. The common metaphor of the heart being consumed in the flames of love.

ll. 12—14. These lines leave no doubt as to the solution of the riddle.

## VII. WESTÖSTLICHER DIVAN.

It seems as if Goethe could not rest content until he had set every chord of the poet's lyre vibrating. When already sixty-five years of age he began in 1814 to devote himself to the poetry of the Orient, which ever since his youth had had a special attraction for him. As far back as 1773 he had chosen Mahomet, as we have seen, as the central figure of a drama which, however, was left unfinished. In 1783 he read with the greatest interest and proposed to translate the *Moallakats*, which William Jones had just published in English. In 1791 he had welcomed in an enthusiastic distich that jewel of Indian poetry *Sakuntala*, of which George Forster had sent him a translation. In 1808, *Medschnun and Leila*, the novel of the Persian poet Dschami, beguiled his leisure hours at Carlsbad. But

the decisive impulse which changed passive admiration into eager emulation came from the famous Viennese Orientalist Josef von Hammer's translation of the Divan of the Persian poet Hafiz ( $\dagger$  1389), which appeared in 1812. Goethe felt that he must „sich dagegen produktiv verhalten, weil er sonst vor der mächtigen Erscheinung nicht hätte bestehen können” (cf. Annalen I, 214). At the same time his study of works relating to the East went on uninterruptedly. First it was the book of Cabus, translated by Diez; Oelsner's *Life of Mahomet*; then the *Travels* of Pietro della Valle, of Olearius, of Tarvernier, of Chardin and others, besides the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of Herbelot and the *Chrestomathie Arabe* of Sylvestre de Sacy.

The earliest poems of the *Weltstößlicher Divan* were written in the first part of the year 1814, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August of the same year, Goethe could write to his friend Riemer: „Die Gedichte an Hafis” (thus he called the Divan-Poems then) „sind auf 30 angewachsen und machen ein kleines Ganze, das sich wohl ausdehnen kann, wenn der Humor wieder rege wird”. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 1815 he wrote to Knebel: „So habe ich mich die Zeit her meist im Orient aufgehalten, wo man freilich eine reiche Erute zu finden ist . . . . Die Gedichte (Divan), denen du deinen Beifall schenkest sind indessen wohl auf das Doppelte angewachsen”. Next we read in a letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 1815 to Zelter: „Das erste Hundert Gedichte ist beinahe schon voll; wenn ich das zweite erreicht habe, so wird die Versammlung schon ein erustes Gesicht machen”. Goethe continued to work at the *Divan* during the next three years, and the collection such as we have it was only published in 1819.

Goethe tells us in the Annalen (p. 304) that it was the agitated state of the political world at that

time which had made him seek refuge in the ideal world of Oriental poetry, and gives expression to the same feeling in the opening poem of the *Divan*, entitled *Hegire* (No. 52):

Nord und West und Süd zerplatzen,  
Throne bersten, Reiche zittern,  
Flüchte Du, im reinen Orient  
Patriarchenlust zu losten!  
Unter Lieben, Tränen, Singen  
Soll Dich Chiser's Quell verjüngen.

But what attracted him still more powerfully were the analogies which existed between this poetry and his own character. On this point a letter to Zelter (3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1820) can leave no doubt: *This Mohammedan religion, mythology and manners give scope to a kind of poetry such as suits my age. Absolute abandonment to the unfathomable will of God, a calm survey of the ceaseless activity of this world, ever reproducing itself like a circle or spiral, love, sympathy hovering between two worlds, all reality purified, resolving itself into a symbol: what can grand-papa wish for more?*

This is still more clearly brought out by a study of the *Noten und Abhandlungen* on the religion, manners and poetry of the Orient, which Goethe appended to the *Divan* and to which he prefixed the famous and characteristic motto:

Wer das Dichten will verstehen  
Muß ins Land der Dichtung gehen;  
Wer den Dichter will verstehen  
Muß in Dichters Lärde gehen.

Another point of resemblance between Goethe and Hafiz is the freshness of their feeling in spite of the burden of years, and that double current of didactic and love poetry to which Goethe refers in another letter to Zelter: *It is a kind of poetry which suits my age, my habits of thinking, my views and my experi-*

*ence, and which at the same time allows me to be as mad in love-subjects as youth always is.*

It is quite wrong to describe Goethe's *Divan* as an imitation of oriental models. Although the poems have a more or less oriental colour and often hit off admirably the spirit of the original, the western poet never loses his individuality, and it is the combination of the German and Eastern elements which lends a peculiar charm to what the poet was careful to call the *West-Eastern Divan*.

With regard to the form cf. Introduction II. B. LVIII.

## 52. *Hegire.*

Written on December 24, 1814 as we learn from Goethe's own manuscript. It stands at the beginning of the first book of the *Divan* and is obviously to be regarded as a kind of introduction to the whole. The word *Hegire* (Arabic, *hijrah*) means a *flight* — it is commonly known as applied to the flight of Mohammed from Mecca in 622 A. D. The flight is here a poetic one from the confusion of the West to the calm serenity of the East. Goethe has used the word elsewhere in this sense, notably of his departure for Italy in 1786, which he calls his *Hegire von Karlsbad*. The word may be used here in a double sense of the flight to the East and the new era in his poetry, which begins with it.

1. 1. A reference to the revolutions, and the dynastic and political changes brought about by Napoleon

1. 3. *Füldte du.* Goethe's alleged indifference to his country's troubles in all these years of distress, and his calm withdrawal to a poetic world of his own, have been the subject of much bitter criticism.

I. 6. Chiser, a legendary Mohammedan prophet who discovered the fount of eternal youth and became its guardian.

Quell, a more dignified and more poetic word than the usual Quelle.

I. 8 and 9. Probe the eternal depths of the human race. Geschlechte common in poetry for the more usual plural Geschlechter. cf. Die Seelen der künftigen Menschenge-schlechte. Klopstock, Messias 8, 379.

I. 22. Shawl. The *w* is not pronounced.

handle = erhandle. The simple verb is frequently employed in poetry where it would be inadmissible in prose.

I. 26. Hafiz' the great Persian poet-philosopher, who died at his birth-place Shiraz in 1388 or 1389 at a ripe old age. While the people regard his songs as simple lyrics and love-songs, they have a deeper mystic significance for the initiated.

II. 25—30. A fine picture of the caravan moving along at night to the singing of Hafiz' songs.

II. 31—36. Hafiz' songs nearly all deal with sensuous themes, such as are here implied.

I. 32. Dein is the old genitive (M. H. G. *din*), now confined to poetry. Cf. Note to Euphrosyne, No. 42, I. 115.

I. 34. Umbraloden, scented locks, from *Ambra*, a sweet perfume.

düftet, older form and now less common than *burstet*, though in M. H. G. both forms were current: *tufsten* and *tüfteten*.

I. 36. Huris, nymphs of the Mohammedan paradise (Persian, *huri*).

### 53. Da du mir Suleika heißtest.

This little poem is taken from the VIII<sup>th</sup> Book of the Divan, and was written on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1815.

I. 2. Benamsen, for the more usual *benamen*.

I. 4. In Eastern lore and poetry Hatem Thai is the model of profuse liberality. A host of tales exist in his honour.

l. 9. Hatem Zograi, or rather Thograi or Tograi, a poet of Ispahan, was on the contrary notorious for his wealth and avarice.

l. 13 sqq. Goethe does not wish to resemble either Hatem Thai or Hatem Tograi, but to keep the golden mean between the two, giving and also receiving love.

#### 54. Zu vollen Bildschmeigen.

Also from the 8<sup>th</sup> Book of the *Diven*.

It was written on September 24, 1815, in the castle grounds at Heidelberg, and inspired by the presence of Marianne von Willemer. Goethe had left Frankfort on the 18<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Heidelberg on the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Willemers on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The trees are the chestnuts in the Castle park. It is a beautiful little picture, with the stamp of direct inspiration upon it, very simple and very effective in its application of natural imagery.

l. 3. Früchte i. e. the chestnuts.

l. 4. With their prickly green husks.

l. 19. nieder macht er sich los, pregnant use for um niedergzufallen.

#### 55. Nicht mehr auf Seidenblatt.

Probably written at Heidelberg on the same occasion as the preceding poem. Frau von Willemer related to a friend with whom she was visiting the Castle at Heidelberg in the last year of her life (1860), how on the very spot where they then were Goethe had in the autumn of 1815 kissed her on the brow, sat long with her in close conversation, and written with his stick a verse in the sand. The poem therefore contains a moment and an experience from the actual life

of the poet. Yet though founded on actuality it is very oriental in language and imagery. The lover, owing to parting, can no longer send his delicately inscribed poems, but though he entrusts his verses to the sand, to be blown away by the winds, their influence still lives, and acts on all lovers who come to the spot. The poet assumes that Suleika in her walks comes to the place, and sinks down to rest on the pillow which Hatem himself has prepared for her.

Like the next poem it is written in free verses and in free rhythm.

l. 1. *Seidenblatt*. Quite Oriental is this thought of writing on precious material to enhance the value of the offering.

ll. 5—8. An entirely Oriental conception of the magic power of words written on the ground.

ll. 14—15. Medschnun, Ferhad, Dschemil—Oriental heroes and lovers whose names occur elsewhere in the *Divan*.

l. 20. Suleika, the name under which Marianne appears in the *Divan*.

l. 21. She reclines in oriental fashion upon cushions spread on the ground.

### 56. Lass mich weinen.

The poet is on a journey, parted far from his beloved, and while the caravan sleeps, his thoughts travel back over every foot of the winding road that has led him away from her. The caravan is but resting for the night, and the morrow will still further increase the distance between them. And that he weeps he holds for no shame, for the greatest heroes have wept over losses no greater than his. The contrast of the lover thinking of his absent mistress and the calculating Armenian is very effective.

1. 4. der Armentier, type of the calculating merchant spirit.  
 1. 7. He grudges all the windings in the road which make the distance greater still.

1. 9. Weinende Männer sind gut: after a Greek proverb. Cf. Die Wahlverwandtschaften: „Vergnügt doch ein edler Griech, der auch Helden zu schildern weiß, keineswegs, die Seinigen bei schmerzlichem Drange weinen zu lassen. Selbst im Sprichwort sagt er: tränenerreichte Männer sind gut“.

1. 10. Achilles wept when Briseis was taken from him: *Iliad I*, 348 sqq.

1. 11. Xerxes wept at Abydos when on his expedition against Greece at the thought that of all that stately host in a hundred years none would be left alive. Herodotus VII, 45 sqq.

1. 13. Alexander the Great murdered his foster-brother Clitus in a drunken brawl in B. C. 327.

1. 14. As the raindrops make fresh green spring from the earth, so the poet's tears, too, can have a fructifying effect.

1. 15. grunelt = grünelt, grows green.



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